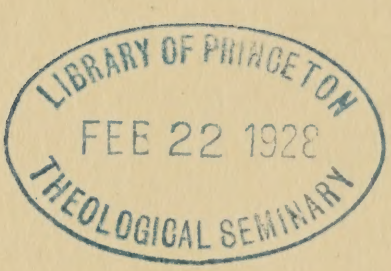

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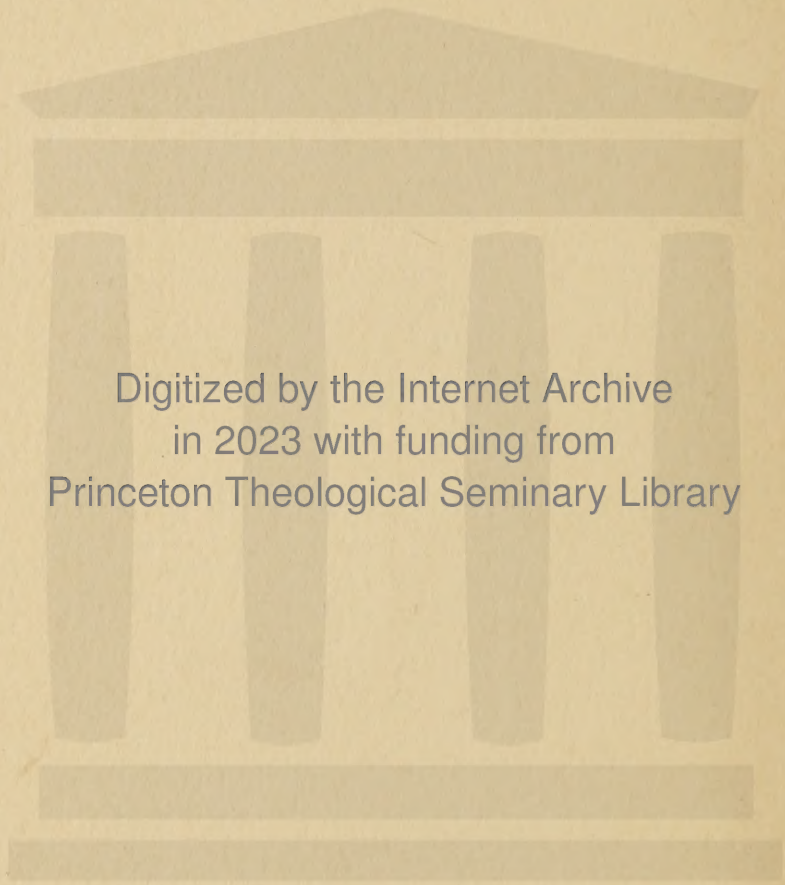
Messages of mercy

MESSAGES OF MERCY

REV. HENRY M. WHARTON, D.D.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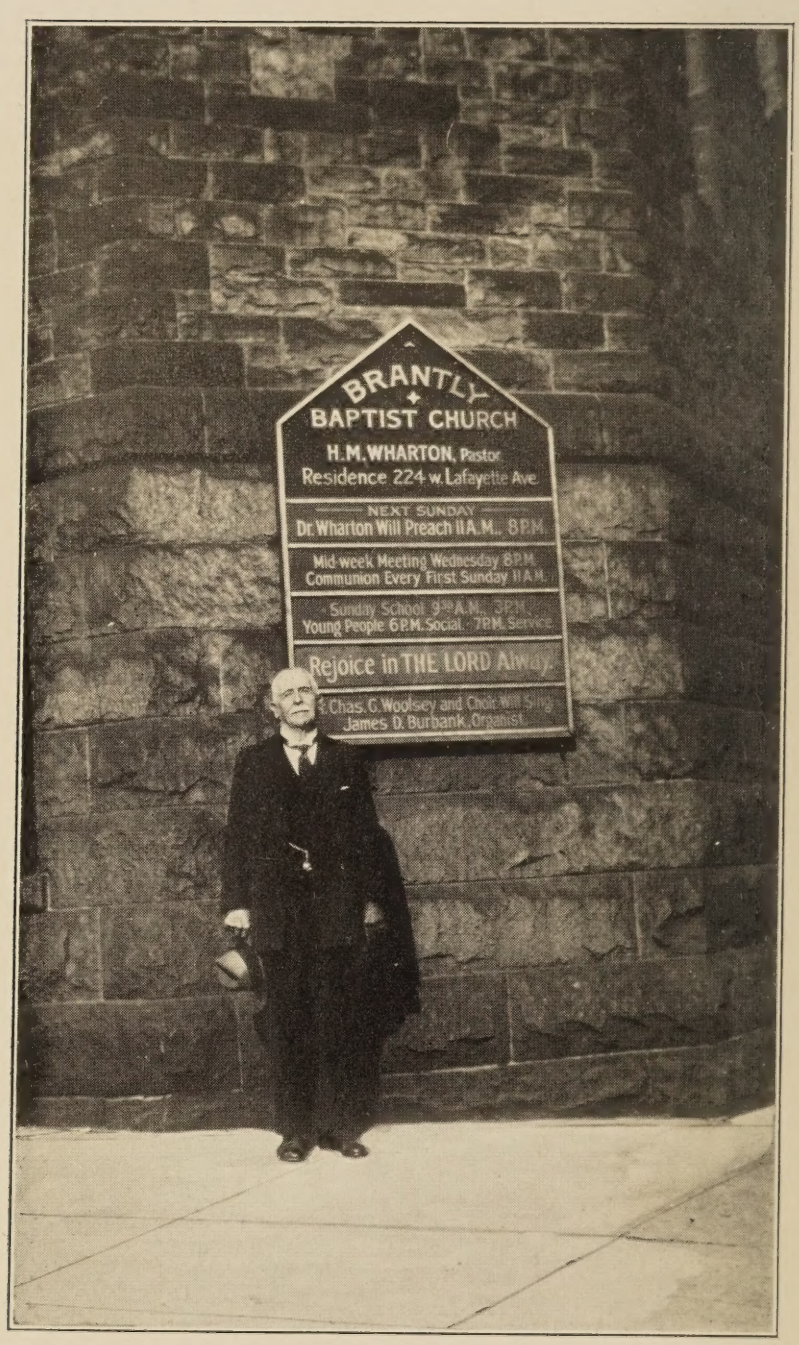
BRANTLY
BAPTIST CHURCH
H. M. WHARTON, Pastor
Residence 224 w. Lafayette Ave.
NEXT SUNDAY
Dr. Wharton Will Preach 11 A.M., 8 P.M.
Mid-week Meeting Wednesday 8 P.M.
Communion Every First Sunday 11 A.M.
Sunday School 9:30 A.M., 3 P.M.
Young People 6 P.M. Social, 7 P.M. Service
Rejoice in THE LORD Alway
Chas. G. Woolsey and Choir Will Sing
James D. Burbank, Organist

1886-1927

The Brantly Baptist Church, now the largest Baptist Church in Baltimore or Maryland. It was originally organized under Dr. Wharton's direction with a membership of thirty-two. The lot was purchased and the present building erected within three years.

MESSAGES OF MERCY

BY

REV. HENRY M. WHARTON, D.D.

PASTOR, EVANGELIST BRANTLY BAPTIST CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD.

INTRODUCTION BY

REV. GEORGE W. McDANIEL, D.D.

PASTOR, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, RICHMOND, VA.

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MESSAGES OF MERCY
— B —
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This book of sermons is dedicated to my dear readers, who are at liberty to use them in any way that may be of service to them, or through them to others.

H. M. Wharton.

Baltimore, Md.
June, 1927.

INTRODUCTION

For more than half a century Dr. H. M. Wharton has preached a wholesome gospel in a winsome way throughout the United States and Canada. Wherever he has conducted evangelistic services there is a desire for his return. In some churches he has held evangelistic meetings seven consecutive years.

God made him a preacher and endowed him with as fine vocal chords as ever spoke or sang. His heart is as big as "all outdoors." His disposition is cheerful, even radiant. He is unsurpassed as a master of assemblies. He knows how to win and hold the attention of his audience. His messages grip the hearer with the first sentence and hold him to the last. He is an expert in that most difficult art of evangelism—extending the invitation, or drawing the net.

The sermons in this volume have been preached many times and often to the same audiences. Yet they are always sweetened by his personality and freshened by new touches. They contain balm for the bruised, sunshine for the despondent, strength for the tempted, and salvation for the lost. "Messages of Mercy," in printed and permanent form, will be gladly received by thousands who have heard them flow mellifluously from the lips of the inimitable author.

To any who have not heard them they are commended without reservation. When Æschines read to his Rhetoric class in Asia Minor the oration of his

old opponent Demosthenes, "On the Crown," the class applauded. Æschines responded: "You should have heard the old bull himself." So when one reads these messages so rich in truth, so beautiful in diction, so apt in illustration, so tender in appeal, he will be moved to praise; but, ah, to have heard the speaker himself! That would have been to catch the warmth and power of his contagious magnetism.

Ministers may find arrows for their quivers in these sermons, and, if one has shot all his arrows, he may find new ones. Here is a preacher whose like we shall never see again.

"You hear that man laughing
You'll think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh too
At the good he has done;
The children laugh loud
As they come to his call,
And the poor man who knows him
Laughs loudest of all."

GEO. W. MCDANIEL.

Study of the Pastor,
First Baptist Church,
Richmond, Virginia.
May 25, 1927.

PREFACE

I often think of the remark of George Whitefield, who, when he was asked to supply a sermon for publication replied to the editor, "I am very willing to give you the sermon, provided you will publish the preacher with it." As the old farmer remarked, "There is more in the man than there is in the land"; and, after all, when you come to speak of preaching and preachers, the personality and the delivery go a long, long way.

A short while ago I sat and looked upon singers and heard their voices. I saw speakers, life-size, and heard them speak just the same as if they had been personally before me. It was all done by the rare and new invention, the Vitaphone. It is wonderful indeed, how they may bring even a whole band before you and you look upon the players as you listen to their music.

Now this will be largely true of the readers of these sermons, who have heard them again and again. You will in your mind see the preacher and hear him speak the very words as you read them. Try it for yourself. The opportunity is before you.

Many of these messages have been published and delivered all over the land and in other lands. If I owe you an apology I will say in the language of Paul, with the change simply of a word, "to say the same things to you for me is not grievous and for you it is safe." Beseeching the blessing of the Greatest of Preachers upon us all, I am,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

H. M. WHARTON.

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MESSAGES OF MERCY

A MERCIFUL MESSAGE

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.—*Matt.* 12:20.

It is a hard thing for us to keep from judging one another. We will make up and express an opinion about people and nine times out of ten we are wrong. Well did Jesus say, "Judge not." And still we keep on judging. You cannot form a correct judgment of another man's life unless you know all the circumstances under which he has acted, and all the influences that have been brought to bear upon him, and back of that, you must know his very nature, and what mortal knows all that? How often men have been misunderstood, and women too, and misjudged, when, if they only could have explained, it would have been all right. Many a heart bleeds in silence because it knows that the world wrongfully condemns it, and yet can't tell the world all about it because it would do more harm than good.

Thank God the world is not our judge! They may say what they please and we cannot stop their mouths, but they are not our judges. Jesus is our Judge, and he knows all about us from the day we were born. He knows our circumstances, our weaknesses, our temptations and how to deal with us. I often think how glad Peter was when he could look Jesus in the face and say, "Lord, thou knowest all

things, thou knowest that I love thee." He knew that the world was pointing at him, and that the brethren would hang their heads or look another way when they met him, but in his heart he knew that he loved Jesus, and that Jesus knew it too. You may say what you please of me, but if I know my heart is right, and full of love for my Saviour, I'll take all my cares to him, for he knows all about me. It is to him and not to the world that we must give account, and the text tells how he will treat us, and what we may expect at his hands.

"A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

The teaching of the text is that the reign of King Jesus is one of gentleness and mercy; that while towards his enemies he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, towards poor weak mortals such as we are, he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world; that, though he came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, he also came to save those who had fallen under the devil's power; that he is a warm-hearted, sympathizing, omnipotent brother, who has come to help the helpless, give liberty to the captive and peace and joy to the broken-hearted and disconsolate. That is what we need. The world laughs at our follies, and condemns our weaknesses. Jesus Christ has compassion on us, and extends a helping hand.

The metaphors used in the text are very beautiful and expressive. Let us look at them, and may the Spirit help us to learn from them. We will make the application as we go along.

"A bruised reed." What is more slender and brittle than a reed? It grows very tall, is unsupported, and subject to the storms and may be knocked down and trampled under foot by horses and cattle. It is easily bruised and broken. The pen of God chose a good comparison in selecting the reed as a likeness to the Christian. If I had come saying you were like the mighty oak, you would have thought, "Well, some Christians may be like the oak, but not I, not I." When I come to talk of the reed though, all of us are ready to say, it is a good comparison, for, like the reed, we are brittle plants in the garden of the Lord and very weak indeed.

Let us think upon this weakness a little while. It is not the most pleasant topic I know, but it will help us to appreciate all the more him who is our strength.

We are weak in *knowledge.* How little we really know! I have heard of a man who could write the Lord's Prayer upon his thumb nail. It seems to me when we come to the things we actually know, we could write all in a very small space. What do we know of God? How much do we know of the wonderful worlds that move in the firmament above us? What do we know of each other? How little we know of ourselves! The man who really knows most is pained at the thought of his own ignorance. We are children playing in the sand on the shore, knowing but little of the ocean before us, and far less of all that lies beyond it. Sometime ago some passengers in a sleeping car were very much annoyed by a crying baby, and all through the night when the train would stop, complaints would be uttered behind the curtains by rest-

less people who could not sleep. It was noticed that the baby was in the arms of a gentleman who seemed very anxious about the little thing, sometimes placing it on pillows, sometimes holding it upon his lap, or pressing it to his heart in his arms as he sobbed and wept over the little unhappy child. When the train stopped on one occasion, words like these were heard: "I wish they would stop that baby from crying, I can't sleep. Nothing but the squawling child all night long." Then from another: "I have not slept a wink. I do not see what they want to have a crying baby in this car for when the passengers are tired out and want to sleep." Still another and a female voice this time saying: "People ought to learn how to take care of babies and not have them crying like this so that nobody can sleep in the car." Then the gentleman himself spoke: "I am very sorry," said he, "I am doing the best I can with the little one. The mother is yonder in the baggage car in her coffin and I am trying to get home to the grandmother with this dear little one. I wish I could keep her quiet, but she is no doubt hungry and tired and half sick. Please forgive me." In less than I am telling it a half dozen people, as quickly as they could, came out from their beds and from behind the curtains, and with tears, stretching forth their hands, said to the man, "Oh, I am so sorry I said anything. Give me the little one. You lie down and rest. I am used to babies, let me take care of the little one." And so they all surrounded the poor father with a desire to help in any way they could.

You see, they did not know. If they had known it would all have been different. And so, you and I often

condemn others or others find fault with us, and it is all because we simply do not know.

We are weak also in *faith.* We wonder at the early Christians who prayed for the deliverance of Peter from prison, and when he knocked at the gate they said it was his ghost. And we pray for the conversion of sinners, and when they come rejoicing in Christ we are afraid to trust them, and talk about excitement. That old woman was a very good specimen of the average Christian, who heard that the Lord had promised that faith should remove mountains and concluded to try hers on a little hill, in front of her house. Next morning when she got up and looked out the hill was still there. "Well," she said, "it's just as I expected." If I should call for the one who has a strong faith here to-day, I doubt if any one would rise. We are ashamed of ourselves, but the fact remains, we are weak in faith.

And we are weak in *zeal.* Ah, how low the fires burn in these cold hearts of ours! Just a few embers left in the ashes, and it would take a search warrant and a skilful hand to find them. When we look over the life we have lived and think how much time we have given to self and how little to God, we do not feel like counting it at all. The entries are all on the debit side of the ledger and nothing to our credit. When a man or woman all full of zeal rushes into God's great harvest field and begins to gather in the sheaves as if the storms of the Last Judgment were about to burst upon the ripened and long-neglected grain, you hear the cry of fanatic, or crank, or enthusiast. They said this of Jesus and Paul, and of

many others who have followed in their footsteps, and they will say it of you if you do your duty. But we seldom hear those things these days. We are all so weak in zeal, that no such charge will likely be brought against us.

We read about men and women who went to death for their faith and who suffered all kinds of torture and persecution because of their zeal for the cause they loved. It seems almost like fiction to read about such men as Paul, and others like him who endured all sorts of suffering for the sake of their Lord and Master. People were sawn asunder. They were mutilated. They were killed because of their zeal. We do not find such burning zeal in the hearts of Christians in these times, do we, my friends? A little child said to her mother: "Mamma, please do not make me go to church next Sunday." "Why, my darling," said the mother, "you go every Sunday." "Well, if I go will you let me sit between you and papa?" "Yes, indeed. We should be glad to have you do this." Sunday came and they went to church as usual, but the little one was particular to get between her father and mother. Then looking frightfully around she said, "Where is it, Mother, where is it?" Her mother said, "Where is what, my child?" "Zeal," said she. "Papa was reading in the Bible the other morning a prayer, and he said, 'The zeal of the Lord's house has eaten me up.' Will it eat me up, Mamma?" I don't think the child was in any danger, do you? It has been a long time since the followers of Jesus could boast of one of their number who was eaten up by zeal for his devotion to his Master.

Then, too, we are weak in our efforts to *resist temptation,* to *endure affliction,* to *testify for Christ;* weak at every point, weak on all occasions; and when we hear ourselves likened to the frail and slender reed we say, "Yes, yes, that is my sad condition exactly."

But this is not all. It is not only the reed, but the *bruised* reed. It is said that the shepherds of Palestine would take pieces of reed and make little musical instruments, on which they could play simple airs, and thus help along the dragging hours, while they watched their flocks in the fields. When the reed became bruised they would cast it aside and get another. So we poor reeds, weak at best, have been bruised by misfortune, our hearts have been crushed by affliction, our drooping spirits broken by the temptations of the devil. The world would cast us aside as good for nothing, and trample us under foot. But what will Jesus do? Here it is, right here in the text. "A bruised reed shall he not break." "No, no, thou poor disconsolate one, though despised and neglected, come to me. I will heal those bruises, I will put a new song in thy heart and thy lips shall praise me ever more."

I tell you, my friends, there is hope for us here. This is Grace, giving strength to the weak and helping the helpless. Now look at the other figure in the text. *"Smoking flax shall he not quench."* In the old times before they had the gas-light and the electric lamp, they used the common oil lamp with no chimney and a wick made of flax. Sometimes the wind would put the light out and the smoking flax was very offensive and they would quench it. You know how it is with a candle. Sometimes you carry it in a strong current of

air and it goes out and the smoke from the burning wick is very disagreeable and so you put it out.

What a picture that is of the poor backslider! It describes him exactly. A while ago he was a burning and a shining light. He was the light of his home, and his church, and his community. How sweetly he sang! how earnestly he prayed! how beautifully he spoke for Jesus. But Satan got him in a draught. A cold wind of temptation struck him and his light went out. Look at him now. He is out of hope, out of the church, out of harness, out of fix every way. Away down in that heart of his there is a spark of love for his Lord still burning and still it will burn. Thank God! That spark once kindled never goes out. His influence is evil and like the smoke from the lamp is a stench in the nostrils of the church and community. What are you going to do with him? "Put him out, put him out; he has brought reproach on the church; he is weak; out with him!" And sure enough they cast him out of the synagogue. What is he to do now? Poor fellow! what is to become of him? The world will not receive him. They say he is a hypocrite. The church has shut the door on him. What can he do? Where can he go? There is one place left him. It is the arms of Jesus. He will not quench the smoking flax, but will fan that spark into a flame and make it burn and blaze with supernal glory. God pity the man who backslides, whose light is out and whose joy of salvation is gone; but God be praised for a Redeemer who will not put out the last spark. Our Father has a great many weak children, and some wander far from home, but his eyes are always on them and he will not

suffer one of them to be lost. Our Saviour, who knows us well, and who searches all hearts, will deal with us in compassion and mercy. "A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory."

And this kind treatment will never cease. *"Till he send forth judgment unto victory."* A father may drive his wayward child from home, a mother may turn her back upon her helpless infant and leave it upon the doorstep of the world's cold charity, but he who came into the world to save us will never forsake those who trust in him. He will stand by them till the judgment day, and they shall be found at his right hand, when the shout of victory and the trump of the archangel shall announce the second coming of our King.

And now before we part, let me make three suggestions:

First. Here is encouragement for all. However weak you may be, here is strength. If you are bruised, here is balm. If you are a wanderer, here is your welcome home.

Second. There is no ground for presumption. The tenderness of our Saviour should bring us closer to him, not drive us farther away. His loving-kindness should constrain us to be watchful, and careful lest we should grieve him. If it does not have that effect upon us, we may well question whether we are his disciples.

Third. Let us do our best for him who has done so much for us. There may be but little that we can do; let us do that little. Our sphere of usefulness may be small; let us improve the opportunities we have.

He will not despise us in our weakness nor quench the little spark of our zeal. I have heard of a man who had four interesting little girls and one boy, but the boy was idiotic. One day the gentleman went away and was gone several days. When the time came for him to return, the mother said, "Come, children, let mamma dress you nicely. Papa is coming to-day and you must be clean and nice when he comes." So she got them ready, and one of the little girls said, "Now let us run out in the yard and gather nice roses for papa." Away they ran, and the little idiotic boy went too. He didn't know what they were doing. His feeble mind could not understand. While they gathered nice roses he picked up a handful of little dead sticks. By and by the cry went forth "Papa is coming, papa is coming." Sure enough he was coming through the yard gate. Here went the little girls with their beautiful flowers shouting and rejoicing and right behind them was their little idiot brother with his dead sticks in his hand, holding them up and trying to show them to his father. The good man paused a moment and before he kissed one of the little girls he said, "Wait a moment, my darlings, just stand aside a minute," and he took his poor little boy in his arms and kissed him and took the few dead sticks and said to him, "You dear little fellow, you did the best you could, and papa loves the sticks just as much as he does the roses."

I think that is the way it will be with some of us, brethren. We are very weak spiritually and can only gather a few dead sticks for our Father, but he will meet us at the gate and take us in his arms and call us faithful and blessed, because we did the best we could in our poor weak way.

THE CURE FOR CARE *

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—*John* 14: 1.

The night before Jesus was crucified he sat at the table talking with his brethren. They had walked at his side for several years, had leaned upon him, lived upon his sweet fellowship, realized what it meant to have such a friend and such a Saviour and now that he was going away from them their hearts were greatly troubled. He saw it and no doubt very quietly and thoughtfully remarked to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

I think I never read those words that I am not carried back over many years to the time when I was a young pastor in the Page Valley of Virginia. I had the church at Luray and the one at Front Royal. These two villages were twenty-five miles apart. There was no railroad then, so I went on horseback. Living in Luray I rode to Front Royal every other Friday or Saturday; stopping half way to feed my horse and eat my lunch and then on to the end of the journey. About the first or second Sunday after I accepted a

* One day while I was in Richmond, in March, 1927, with my beloved friend, George W. McDaniel, and his excellent people of the First Baptist Church. He would take me around during the day and have me deliver messages in various and sundry places, including railroad shops, tobacco factories, and on this special occasion to the Old Ladies' Home. I conducted the service in a room filled with the dear old women and the audience was added to by some from the outside, including several gentlemen. It was a pleasant occasion. Dr. McDaniel conducted the service. Robert Miller of Baltimore, who was leading the singing, sang several songs; then my message came, and here it is.

call to Front Royal a very pleasant old lady came to me one morning after my sermon and said, "I am glad to meet you, Mr. Wharton. I am not a member of your denomination but I belong to the Primitive Baptists, sometimes called the Old School." I greeted her very pleasantly and knew full well what it meant, for my church was in the midst of that phase of the denomination at Luray. They were a fine and worthy people, believing in some of the principal doctrines of our denomination but decidedly opposed to us in others. For example, they did not believe in Sunday schools nor in missionary work of any kind. No musical instrument in the church. I remember to have heard on one occasion that one of the old ministers stood up to announce a hymn. The book was known as the Plymouth Selection and contained hundreds and hundreds of hymns. The old brother who "set the tune" sat down to the left of the pulpit. The preacher rose and with the big thick hymn book in his hand unopened said, "Sing the thousand and twoth hymn." The old gentleman who was expected to start the hymn, turned the leaves rapidly and looking up said, "Brother, there ain't them many in the book." "Well," replied the preacher, "sing as many as there is." I do not say this in derision, but simply as a point of interest. They did not believe at all in an educated ministry nor in preparation of sermons. The preacher would sometimes rise to his feet and say, "Somebody give me a text and I will preach from it." In case the text was given he would go on and preach from it and usually he was "from it" all through his rambling discourse. I mention these things to throw light on what

I am now about to tell you. This lady, a very fine and prominent woman, was a member of that sect, and said to me, "I have a daughter seventeen years of age who is bedridden, and every new preacher who comes to Front Royal I ask him to come to my home and preach a sermon at the bedside of my dear child. Will you come, Mr. Wharton, and do us that favor?" Well, I was young and green but earnestly desirous to do what good I could in any and every way. "When would you want me?" I asked. "To-morrow," she replied. I had no sermon ready and for the moment I hesitated, then added, "Would to-morrow two weeks do, when I come down again?" I knew that would give me time to prepare. "Oh, yes," she added, "that would suit me just as well." "All right," I said, "my good friend, you may expect me to go with you in two weeks."

It was a beautiful morning on Monday two weeks later that I mounted my horse and riding several miles out of the village came to the home, a lovely country place not far from the main road. The lady met me at the front door and, saying how glad she was to see me, added that Belle was anxiously expecting me for the service I was to hold at her bedside. She had been talking about it all the week, the mother said, and looked forward to your coming. So come right along with me and we will go in. A curtain hung over the door lest a breath of air should fall upon the fragile little form that lay in the bed. I never looked into a brighter, sweeter face as she held up her hand and welcomed me. Although she was seventeen years of age she was very small indeed, and on account of some

spinal trouble had been for years confined to her bed. Taking a seat with the mother I began at once to prepare for the little service. I had a hymn book and Bible with me and so said very quietly to her that I would have a short service including hymns and prayer and reading of the Scripture and preaching of the sermon just as she would want me to have, as I had been informed. I sang a verse or two, led in prayer and read a portion of Scripture. I had already prepared my little sermon, which I determined should be about ten minutes in length and from this text: "Grace which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all." As I rose to take my text she surprised me by saying, "I have selected a text for you, Mr. Wharton." Remembering she belonged to the family whose church did not accept prepared sermons but whose ministers often preached from texts selected by members of his congregation, it occurred to me at once and the whole situation was before my mind. I was frightened half to death. If she had drawn a pistol from under the covering and pressed it to my head I hardly think I would have been more excited. I knew very well that if I did not take her text but insisted upon the sermon I had prepared, it would amount to nothing, for in her own mind according to the teaching of a whole lifetime she would think it was a mere human performance and God had nothing to do with it. On the other hand, I felt confident that if I took her text, which probably might be some unusual and difficult portion of Scripture, I should go to pieces on it like a frail boat dashed upon the rocks. My thinking was done

with the rapidity of lightning and I decided I would take her text let come what would and do the best I could under the circumstances. Standing before her and looking as composed as I possibly could I inquired, "What is your text?" She replied, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." I launched out and had no difficulty with making the first utterance. It was this, "There is a great deal of trouble in the world." I was in it at that very moment over my head. Then I went on, "All of us are acquainted with that fact." I probably discoursed for a few more words along that line but they don't come back to me now. My next remark was: "The most of our trouble is heart-trouble, and we gather from this text that it is possible to have a remedy for our heart-troubles. Sometimes the trouble is about our own sins and then about our unbelief. We have troubles again because of sickness or affliction. Various indeed are the sources of our heart-troubles. But there is a remedy." "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The great and blessed remedy for our heart-troubles is Jesus himself; but no remedy is of any value unless it can be applied, and here is the application. "Faith: Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And so, by our belief in him we have the remedy applied for our heart-troubles and casting all of our burdens upon him we are made free, for he said himself: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Let us come then to him whatever may be the burden upon our heart and lay that burden at his dear feet. He would receive and bear it and we shall have it no more.

"Here bring your wounded hearts.
Here tell your anguish.
Earth has no sorrow
That heaven cannot carry."

Closing with a word of prayer I went away much bewildered and in doubt as to whether my visit had been of any avail whatever. But they both thanked me and gave me to understand that I had conferred a favor in coming. I have always found in the experience of many years that whenever I have made a visit of that kind I was without exception benefited and blessed myself. Such errands of mercy made in the name of a disciple carry their reward with them.

Perhaps a month or two elapsed when standing in the pulpit one Sunday morning in my church at Front Royal I noticed a commotion at the door. I saw several men starting up the aisle with a burden they were bearing between them. It proved to be a stretcher or a small cot and they brought it along the aisle with its precious burden, the dear little girl to whom I had preached and blessed in front of my pulpit. She looked up into my face with a great smile upon her sweet countenance and I felt at the time as if an angel was blessing me with her presence.

At the close of the service I went down to speak to her. Taking my hand in both of hers, a radiant smile on her face and the tears dropping down upon her pillow, she said, "Oh, how can I ever thank you? God blessed your message to me when you came that day and gave me peace and joy in believing in him. I have no more troubles now, for ere they come I take and give them to him who said: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.' "

WAIT

Be still, and know that I am God.—*Ps.* 46 : 10.

The events of human life are not accidents, they are providences. The afflictions and cares and trials which bring so much pain and suffering to our hearts, are not works of chance; they are the works of God. And, oh, how strange and mysterious these visitations of providence sometimes seem. How contrary to all our hopes and expectations and prayers, and if we are to be the judges, how opposed to our own good and the good of those around us! Nor are we alone in saying that the ways of God are dark and inscrutable. It is written, "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? It is (that is, the knowledge of him) as high as heaven; what canst thou do?—deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" David, than whom no man ever drank more deeply of the cup of bitterness, as his mind dwells upon the providence of God, exclaims, "Clouds and darkness are round about him." And Paul, the memorandum of whose sufferings given in one of his letters is enough to awaken sympathy and pity in the most unfeeling heart, cries out, "Oh, the depth of the riches—both of the wisdom and knowledge of God—how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!"

If such be the opinion of men, whose minds were inspired with heavenly wisdom, and whose privilege it was to talk with God almost face to face, surely when such visitations of his providence come upon us, it is

not strange if we are confused and bewildered beyond degree. And we *are* confused and bewildered, and the first impulse is to inquire why these dreadful things are so. Why is it that one is taken and the other left? Why is it that the little motherless children are left to meet and contend with the difficulties and hardships of life just at a time when of all others they most needed a mother's tender care? Why is it that yonder lone widow has been deprived of all she loved, by the hand of death? Her husband, her protector, her all, on whom she fondly leaned with a woman's love and a woman's pride, is taken away, and then her children one by one are taken; or if they are spared, spared only to make her feel more sorrow and anxiety for the living than for the dead. Why is it that homes once bright and happy, all radiant and joyful with words and deeds of love, are now dark and desolate and cheerless as the halls of death? Why is it that lives all glowing with bright hopes and prospects for great usefulness and good to God and man are suddenly destroyed? Oh, why is it that so many, *many* hearts are made to feel the poignant pangs of grief, and go on bleeding and mourning and crushed all their days on earth? BUT STOP! God says you must not ask such questions. It is extreme arrogance to arraign the most high God at the bar of human reason.

Martin Luther said that on one occasion he earnestly prayed to know the mind of God in a certain matter and that while he prayed he heard a voice saying to him, "I am not to be traced." And it is true, we have no right to inquire. It is impossible for us to trace him, for "God moves in a mysterious way." What

then are we to do, when in the midst of afflictions and hard and heavy trials? When the heart is crushed and the very soul bowed down with sorrow, what are we to do? He tells us what to do.

"Be Still, and Know That I am God." Here is a message of love and tenderness to poor suffering humanity. Here are words of comfort and consolation and sweet assurance to the afflicted and the distressed. "Be still, and know that I am God." I undertake to say that there is not a heart that beats within this room that has not in some way felt life's cares and life's troubles; or if there should be one so blessed that no cloud has ever crossed his path, be assured that it is in store for you, for man is born unto trouble, as sure as he was born to breathe and live and die. When I come then to-day with words of comfort for the afflicted, I am sure that all will feel deeply and personally interested, for we all need comfort—you need it; I need it; we stand on common ground. May God apply these precious truths to every heart.

We find here a *glorious truth announced,* which is the gist of the text, the basis of all the good that is in this message—I am God.

We also have *a duty enjoined upon us;* and *the reason for that duty,* and I shall undertake to show that the reason is sufficient under all circumstances.

First, *The glorious truth announced.* "I am God."

My friends, we too often forget this truth. Many of us have never learned it, and yet God has been teaching it to the world and to man individually ever since the world began. How has he taught that he is God? Why, in ten thousand ways. Time would not

allow me to mention more than one way, and yet that will be sufficient. David mentions it in this Psalm. He wants to prove to man that the Lord is God and beside him there is none other. And see how beyond all controversy he proves it. He does not say, come look at this little drop of water, this little grain of sand, this blade of grass, and let that prove that he is God. He does not say, come stand with me on some mountain top and look at the earth and sky spread out before us with all their beauties which surpass description. Surely this would have been enough. He does not say, come go with me to yonder hovel, see that poor besotted specimen of humanity, see him rise from his miserable couch, his eye beaming with love, his soul all on fire with zeal for God; see him yonder with multitudes at his feet as he pours forth "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," see that monument of the grace of God and let it prove that the Lord is God alone. No, David chooses none of these evidences, but listen—this is his proof and all the proof he had to stamp the awful, yet glorious truth upon the soul of man, that the Lord is God—"Come," said he, "behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." You see, then, David demonstrates the great truth by appealing to the *power* of God, and not the creating, upbuilding, saving, redeeming power, but the desolating, destroying power of God. Come, see what *desolations* the Lord hath made. Oh, how pitiable is the condition of man that he forces God to resort to the most desperate of all measures to teach him a truth that ought to come to him with his first consciousness, his first rational thought! See how he

has taught this truth to the world, to nations and to men.

We have had a marvelous demonstration of this truth recently in the overwhelming waters of the Mississippi River and the tributaries along the way of that great stream. We have looked upon the wide waste of water. We have seen houses torn from their foundations. Houses that men built suddenly falling into fragments. Distracted men, women and children on rafts rushing for high places. Destruction in every direction. The rains pour. The heavens are dark and threatening, and the angel of death hovers over the wild, shrieking, wretched people. It is the desolating hand of the Great Jehovah teaching the truth that is so hard to learn, "I am God and besides me there is none other."

See, how he has taught it to nations. Let one suffice—yonder in Canaan dwells a happy people, the land is theirs, it flows with milk and honey, their daughters are fair, their sons are strong and mighty, their fields are fertile, their treasuries full of gold, but they have forgotten God. He sends his angels, his prophets, his special visitations, but all to no avail, and now he reveals his *desolating hand*—he severs their kingdom, sends them into captivity, crushes them and then sends a Redeemer to save them if they will only learn the truth: but "He came to his own and his own received him not." They reject him, they crucify him, they cry out, "His blood be upon us and our children," and the awful request is answered to this very day. Where are the Jewish people now? A cursed and scattered nation, in whose sad history we read the letters traced

in blood—*"I am God."* So he taught it to men. Alexander thought he was a god—but look yonder—what bloated, putrefying, lifeless body is that? It is Alexander dead—what does it mean? It means, saith the Lord, that *"I am God."* But why need we speak of others, when the truth has been taught to you, man and woman, and to me. He has desolated your home and your heart, and yet you will not learn the truth that he is God. You have some other idol, some other god; you have ignored the Majesty of Jehovah, who is God, over all blessed forever.

Now, then, we have the glorious truth, "I am God." But why is it, we are prone to inquire, that God thus teaches it? Why does he teach by the hand of desolation? We must not inquire. One thing we know, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." It is fair to presume that we force him to this dreadful course. It is the father chastening the child, hoping as he inflicts the necessary blow, and saying, as we look up with broken hearts, amazed and bewildered and crushed—*be still, be still.* This is *the duty enjoined upon us.* Amid our agonies this is what he would have us do when down in the depths of affliction. *Be still.* And is it easy to perform this duty? Ah, no. It is very hard. It is not the stillness of idleness, not the inactivity of dead hopes, it is the *calm repose of faith. Still* as to words; don't murmur, never complain. *Still* as to your mind; be sure you do not harbor a rebellious thought. *Still* as to your heart; don't wish it had been otherwise. *Still* as to your soul; which is yourself, place it in the arms of God and let it rest there calmly, peacefully, as an

infant rests upon its mother's bosom. Is it hard to do? Ah, yes, and nothing but the mighty grace of the Almighty God can enable us to do it. When he says *Be still,* say, "Lord, I'll try," and then the help will come. I know that God gives us strength to bear our trials—

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow,
I'll strengthen thee, help thee and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

This is our duty, *Be still*— Bear with me a little longer and I will give you the best of reasons for it.

"Know that I am God."

Know him, not intellectually only, we must have a heart-knowledge of him. If a stranger should come to me and inflict pain and say it was for my good I should not bear it; but if a friend, much more if *my father* did so I would submit; so we must know that he is God by experience.

What is embraced in this knowledge if he is God? He is the embodiment of *Knowledge, Wisdom* and *Love* and *Power.* If you are afflicted God knows it. His wisdom arranged and approves it. His love prompted it. His power permitted it. All power is his, in heaven and in earth, and the keys of death and hell swing at his girdle. This is our sweet assurance, "Know that I am God," and it is sufficient in any hour of trial. Let us see.

Are you *poor?* He knows it. The fields are his, the forests, the running brooks, the falling rain and the warm sun, and he will not let you suffer. The

Lord will provide. "It may not be my way, it may not be thy way, but in some way or other the Lord will provide."

Disease may be wasting your frame and drying up the springs of life and health, but God knows it. He permits it and it is well, or he would not permit it.

Temptations, hard to endure. We are assured that he will not suffer any to come that we cannot, with his help, withstand. Job was tempted. Satan had to ask permission, but God said, "Thus far, and no farther." When a man fails it is because he takes his case in his own hands.

Enemies. David seemed most troubled on this account, and it is a great annoyance. A man's fingers tingle sometimes to get hold of some serpent in human form that has tried to sting him; but God's ear is at the slanderer's mouth, his eye is on him, and God laughs at him, for he sees that his day is coming.

Death. Horrible, when it comes to take our loved ones! Ah, death makes sad havoc of our hopes. The eye dim that beamed with love and tenderness. Lips that spoke only words of kindness now pale and silent. The hands ever ready to be employed for our comfort and enjoyment now folded across that bosom in which once beat a warm, loving heart. Oh, when you look upon one, cold, motionless, lifeless, and they tell you death has caused it all, you feel that death is man's worst enemy to happiness, to hopes, nay, to all that he values and loves. But death has not come without the knowledge and approval and permission of God. He stands by and sees the resistless monster lift his icy finger and lay it on the beating heart, extinguishing the

light of life. And we turn away stricken, bewildered, crushed, and wonder why it is, but God has done it, and it is enough. Oh, let us ever try amid life's afflictions, though they plunge us into the very depths of despair, let us try to remember these words and be solaced by them.

"Be still, and know that I am God." Let us not endeavor to fathom the deep things of God. Let us not be wearing out our fingers and breaking our teeth, trying to untie knots that were never intended to be untied here. We couldn't understand them, anyway. If God should reveal to us the mysteries of his wonder-working providences we should be overwhelmed. Our frail natures would sink beneath the flood of light. Jesus, talking to his disciples, said, "I have many things to say, to you, but you cannot bear them now," and so we could not bear an explanation of the strange events that are under God's direction, constantly transpiring in us and around us. But be content. Wait on the Lord. You are in a boat, gliding rapidly down the stream of time; presently death will come. Presently the river will begin to widen, and the ocean of eternity roll before you, upon whose billows you will ere long be borne to the bosom of God. Death, then, will cease to be your enemy and become your friend. The ancients used to represent death, not as a skull and cross-bones, not as a skeleton with great scythe, but as a beautiful youth, with inverted torch in one hand and a wreath in the other. The torch indicating the wasting away of life; the wreath emblematic of the more glorious life above. So death appears to the Christian who meets him with a smile and takes from his hand

the imperishable crown of life. And when our feet shall touch the other shore, our vision, which is here so limited that it is bounded to a span, will be made far-reaching as the realms of space. Our mental faculties, which bend with the weight of a simple mathematical problem, will be enlarged and made as vast as eternity itself, and as we gather to our bosom those we have loved and lost on earth, we shall hasten on towards the throne of God, where, for the first time, we shall gaze upon the face of Jesus and hear, if you have the curiosity to inquire, or the desire to know, why all these afflictions and trials have been brought upon us here—till then, my soul, *"Be still"* and know that he is God.

MEMORIAL *

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—*Matt.* 25:21.

We are having to-day a memorial service in loving appreciation of our girl evangelist, Nell E. Mays, whose brief and beautiful life ending at the age of twenty-five has been a joy and a blessing to multitudes of people. I first heard of her over the telephone one day through one of the young women of this church who inquired if I had heard of the girl preacher who was then in Baltimore and also conducting meetings in the Hampden Baptist Church, saying that many were attending these services, some of whom were members of Brantly Church, and she believed I would enjoy seeing and listening to her. As soon as I could do so I attended one of the services. The house was crowded and the people were all singing. I took a seat near the front and sat waiting for her coming. In a few minutes she walked up to the pulpit accompanied, I believe, by her mother, and taking a seat quietly observed the congregation until the hymn was through. She then rose and in the simplest sort of way without the slightest indication of embarrassment or affectation walked down the pulpit steps and took her seat at the piano facing the audience. "Now," she said, "let us

* This sermon was preached in Brantly Baptist Church, Sunday morning, May 22, 1927, in memory of the girl evangelist, Nell E. Mays, whose death occurred in Washington, D. C., May 12, 1927. She was a member of Brantly Church.

all sing," and she began in a fine, strong, sweet, musical voice to sing:

"Everybody ought to love Jesus,
Jesus, Jesus;
He died upon the cross to save us from sin,
Everybody ought to love Jesus."

Could there be anything more simple and yet more thoroughly full of truth than these lines? The people caught on at once and not only everybody was singing but everybody was singing as if everybody loved Jesus. They could not help, though unconsciously, catching and holding the truth that Jesus had died the death of the cross to save us from sin and everybody ought to love him. That was the key-note of her preaching. It was the burden of her message and everywhere she went the people gathered joyously to hear her and gladly received the word she proclaimed.

Her life was indeed brief. I think she was about eighteen when she began to preach and twenty-five when her beautiful life was taken from the earth. It is a remarkable fact that some lives in this world have brought their great blessings in the shortest space of time. There lived a little boy whose mother was a member of our church some years ago. He came to Sunday school and on one particular occasion, it being Temperance Day, he, as usual, was called upon to recite the golden text. And these were the words, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." As he went along home that day, having remained to the church

service, he said to his mother, "Mamma, when I get to be a man may I be a preacher like Mr. Wharton?" "Yes, my son," she replied, "and mamma will be mighty glad to have her boy for a preacher." They walked along and talked together, the little fellow becoming more and more confirmed in the thought that he would be a preacher. I well remember how this impression was made on my mind when I was a child. My mother, when the neighbors would come in and speak concerning her little boy, who would generally be playing around his mother, would put her hand on my head, "This is my preacher boy." It was my call to preach and has gone with me all through life. And so this mother felt thankful in her heart that her boy wanted to be a preacher. The next morning the housemaid came and said to the mother, "I wish you would look out at the window and see Bancroft." She looked through the blinds; the yard gate was close by, and the little fellow swinging on the gate would call to people as they passed and say, "Do you drink?" They would pause with various replies and his rejoinder would be, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." A little later on in the morning the mother went down town shopping and Bancroft went with her, the little six year old boy. As she went into the stores and began conversing with the salesman or salesladies as the case might be, the little fellow would break in with the question, "Do you drink?" The mother reproved him instantly by saying, "Here, son, don't speak that way to the lady or gentleman." "Mamma," he said,

"I just want to know." One happened to be a young man. He cleared his throat and finally said, "Well, sometimes I do." With the reply came instantly, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." As she came along home that day they were in the street car and he brought the same question to the conductor and to others arresting attention at once as he recited to them his little text. It was not long after this that the little fellow sickened, grew worse and died. On his death-bed he said, "Mother, when I get to be a preacher and get sick, will Mr. Wharton take my place in the pulpit till I get well?" To which she answered, "Oh, yes, my child. Mr. Wharton will do anything for you that he can." I stood by the casket and repeated to them some of the things I have said to you and I added that the little fellow was a preacher. He brought his message and delivered it; preached his sermon and has gone home to the Master whom he served. Summerfield, you know, like a flaming seraph shot across our sky and preached himself to death when he was twenty-two years of age. Harry Moorehouse, whom Mr. Moody introduced to the world a mere boy preacher, wore himself out before twenty-six years had passed over his head. But why should I multiply examples of a brief ministry and a finished life in so short a time when we have the example of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, whose earthly ministry was but three short years. So it was with Nell Mays. She delivered her messages, filled every year with abundant labors, until

God laid his hand on her head and called his precious child to come home to him.

She conducted meetings in this church and upon our camp ground in Virginia and then went forth to other cities and states. Never tiring, never resting and only ceasing when physical strength failed her. True it was in her case that the Spirit was willing but the flesh was weak and at last she was compelled to leave the field of her labors, lay aside her cross and go to receive her crown. Her favorite text as she said was: Matt. 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." This also was the text from which she preached her first sermon. The verse and promise upon which she relied for her inspiration and her strength was Matthew 28:20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." If you will examine these three portions of Scripture you will find the foundation upon which her life was built and upon which her ministry was established: consecration of herself, wholly and entirely to her Lord and Master; the triumphant assurance of her salvation as set forth in the eighth of Romans; the special work she was to do and the source of strong opinion which she was to rely on as seen in the verse, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." As a preacher she was most kind and acceptable everywhere. Her sermons were saturated with love, and yet with fearless

loyalty to the truth she would at times arraign the violators of the law of God with unsparing and convincing words.

She believed that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin and her favorite hymn which we sang at her funeral and will sing here to-day was the old heaven-born melody—"There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins."

She was especially attractive to young people and gathered them closely about her as her friends and followers and yet never did she assert her supremacy or superiority. Her humanity was a precious gem and without ever seeking to manifest this wonderful grace it showed as the light which sparkled from each facet of the diamond. When it came at last that the time of her departure was at hand her own farewell words give to us more than any other could express her perfect assurance and sweet submission to her Master's will.

"This is the day before I plan to leave for Florida, and I want to have some kind of a note behind in case I shouldn't come back. We never know when God will call us home. After all, life is just a *day* repeated. Should I live fifty more years, at the end I'll look back and find just a *bunch* of *to-days*. I dare not wish to see beyond the curtain that hides to-morrow. I must live in my own little realm of now. It isn't for me to know just *what* chapter I'm writing in life's story. Mine is to live so close to the Master by his grace, and the Power of the Holy Spirit, that should I even be writing the *last* chapter, I would be *ready* to submit the whole to his eternal care. For when the

great Critic writes on my life Finis, and puts the little book of sorrows, joys, failures, victories on the shelf of his great library, and tells me that I may come to rest with him, I want to have the knowledge that all the sins are blotted out by Jesus' precious blood and that all the victories won have been because of his strength and power in me. I don't know how much longer I am to fight life's battle, but praise God, I am ready any time, should I fall at the battle front. I haven't much earthly wealth, but I am a child of the King, and accustomed to going with the aristocracy of heaven. I am glad, too, that my whole family are heirs with me and joint-heirs with Jesus. I would rather have the knowledge you are all saved, than to know you were multi-millionaires. My personal desire and request for each of you is, don't cry. Use your tears for lost souls. Secondly, remember for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. So you will all fight twice as hard to make up for my part. Now if this should be the last, I will be waiting for you in glory. Till you come, you may be sure I will be spending the time praising our God."

As I stood behind her casket at her funeral so I repeat here again the words which I think are unquestionably hers, "Servant of God, well done!" Ceasing from thy loved employ, the battle fought, the victory won, enter thy Saviour's joy.

A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
—*Timothy* II:43

Jesus Christ has an army in this world, and it is wonderfully interesting to study its history. It started about eighteen hundred years ago, with a handful of men and women. They had no influence, a very little property, and divided that out among themselves. Now, the sun never sets upon the vast army of the Lord.

This army is unlike any other that ever walked the earth. Other armies are made up of men, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. This is composed of men, women and children, old and young. But they are all volunteers. There are no conscripts. Conscripts will not fight if they can help it, and they don't stand firm in the fight.

Our cause is the highest and noblest that ever enlisted the sympathy, or called forth the energies of the human heart. Others fight for territory, so do we. Satan has taken possession of our territory, and we are fighting to win it back. Then go forth and battle against the Invader. Nothing stirs the blood in a man more than to have his home invaded. Not only our homes, but our hearts are invaded. The tyrant takes away our happiness, injures our usefulness, and seeks to destroy us, both soul and body.

Unlike other armies, our object is not to kill, but to

make alive, not to destroy men, but to save them. It is a life-saving service. Along our shores are men, whose business it is to go to a wrecked ship, and save the lives of men and women sinking beneath the waves. All around us in life's ocean, souls are perishing, and it is our mission, thank God, to go out after them and save them.

We are unlike others, also, in our arms and equipments. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. With the armor of God on, and the truth of God and Spirit of God within, we are ready for the fray. Our mightiest warriors have been those who were mightily endued with power from on high. When Whitefield was preaching in the fields near New York City, a man went to hear him, and put several stones in his pocket to throw at him. But before the sermon was over, he came up, crying, "Mr. Whitefield, I came here with stones in my pocket to break your head, but God has broken my heart." Yes, and it will be so every time.

Now, cast your eye over the battlefield. Where do we have to meet the enemy? In our own hearts first. Brother, you will find it an endless fight while you stay here on the footstool of God. If any man thinks he has won the fight, and has no further trouble with the devil, he is in a dangerous condition. Why, the old enemy has chloroformed you, and put you to sleep. Wake up, wake up, and renew the battle. Open fire on him from every part of the field.

Our home is another battle ground. He will come with a little private dance, or a harmless game of cards, or an innocent glass of wine. Take care, mother, he is trying to gain admission to your home. Meet him at

the threshold and dispute every inch of ground. And let me say to every head of a family here, if you want to throw up a powerful breast-work against the enemy in your home, erect the family altar. Take that old Bible down, knock the dust off of it, and call wife and children to prayers. Don't say you are a hard-working man, and have to get up and be off early. Get up earlier, and don't go away until you have asked the blessing of God on you and yours. In my county, in Virginia, the farmers get up before day and take breakfast by candle-light. It's about the only objection I ever had to them. A man went over there from the east side of the Blue Ridge and stayed a few days, and when he went back he said they were the most hospitable people he ever saw, they would wake him up in the night, and give him something to eat. Wake your family in the night, and have prayers, if you cannot do otherwise, but be sure you don't neglect it.

Then, too, the battle extends beyond heart and home, out into the community. Every gambling den, house of infamy, liquor saloon, is a stronghold of hell, and must be overthrown. The Christian soldier is never off duty. Whether in his home or in his place of business, at church or at the polls, he is a soldier of the cross.

When the battle of Trafalgar was raging, Lord Nelson's voice was heard above the roar of cannon, saying, "England expects every man to do his duty." And he was not disappointed. Jesus expects the same of us. Let us be faithful. God have mercy on the man who prays against the liquor saloons, and then goes to the polls and votes to let them stay!

This battlefield is as big as the world. Wherever a human being is found who has not given his heart to God, there Satan is entrenched, and there we must make the attack, and by the help of God, set the captive free.

Before I leave this part of my subject, let me call your attention to our Leader. Who is he that rides at the head of this great army? It is the Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ, the ever-conquering Immanuel. The keys of death and hell swing at his girdle. His garments are dyed in crimson, and his banner stained with blood, but he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let us rally around him and follow where he leads.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.

"From Victory unto victory,
His army He shall lead
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed."

Many of us here are in this army, and the text says, "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." While I was thinking over this text, I was puzzled to find any hardness to endure for Jesus. It isn't hard to come to prayer-meeting once a week, that does us good. It is not hard to go to church once or twice on Sunday, if the preacher doesn't preach long sermons, and says nothing to hurt our feelings. It is not hard to look down among the quarters and half-dollars, and get out

a nickel, and then put it in the basket; nothing hard in that. It is not hard for me to preach three or four times a week, especially when you pay me well for it. Paul knew what hardness was. When they took up stones out of the street, at Lystra, and pelted him till they thought he was dead, when they chained him in the prison, when he had to work with his hands for a living, that was hardness. Ah, brethren, there are too many of us looking for soft places, like they used to do during the war. We are hunting for bomb proofs. Just now, while I was talking about cards, and dancing, and drinking, some were thinking you couldn't give up all that. Ah, you say you can't join this church, it is too hard to give up all these things. Well, my friends, if you can't give them up, for heaven's sake don't come here. Go hunt your bomb-proof where they may let you come in and hide, for you are not fit to be a soldier.

There are some soldiers who will not fight even after you get them into the battle. I knew a man whose captain missed him in the fight, and when he found him he was in an old hollow tree, and he had to pull him out. That is the way it is with many Christians. They do very well here, but they go off to the Springs and other places in summer, and they get into a hollow tree. Nobody knows they are Christians. If you were looking for soldiers of the cross, you could never pick them out—never in the world.

Then there are soldiers that only fight when they can touch elbows with their comrades. Get them into a hand-to-hand conflict, and they run in a minute. I'll tell you what tries a man's grit. Let him be traveling

a lonely road all alone, and come up face to face with the enemy. If there is any backbone to him you will find it out then. There are plenty of workers when a great revival is going on. Easy enough to fire into the enemy then; but wait till you are in your place of business, or meet a man on the cars, or hear him swear in the streets, *that* will test your Christian manhood, and tell whether you are a good soldier or not.

It is easy enough to say, "Go out in the highways and hedges and compel them to come in," but it is rather hard to do it. I can preach about going to heathen lands and tell the blessed tidings, but it doesn't occur to me to say, "Here am I, send me." Oh, let us fall on our faces before God and say, "Lord, show me something hard to do, and by thy help I will do it." *Endure hardness.* There is a beautiful panorama of a battle now on exhibition at Washington. It looks like a battle but it is only a picture. And that is the way with many of our churches. They are battle tableaux, but there is no fight going on. No enemy driven from the field, no souls saved. We are just playing soldiers. No sacrifice, no hardship, no long and weary march, no death-grapple, no shout of victory. If we are going to be soldiers let us be good soldiers. I have several friends who were in the war, and I hear men talk of them now who knew them then. They say, "We knew that man. We have seen him under fire; he was a good soldier." And when we get up yonder and look the great Captain in the face, what greater blessing could you wish than have him point you out and say, "Here is one of mine; he fought under my flag; he stood firm in the battie; he was a

good soldier"? We may win that honor if we will. It is within reach of us all. These little girls who sit before me here may be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. I know a man in this city who was sitting on his door-step, and a little girl and her brother came along with some tracts. They offered one to him. "Go along with your tracts," he said; "I don't want any of your tracts." The little girl walked close up to the side of her brother as they moved off, and she said, "Oh, brother, he is lost, isn't he?" The man heard it. She had fired the shot and the shot had struck. He sat there thinking about it, and the more he thought the worse he got, until he just turned and went into the house and fell on his knees and asked God not to let him be lost. That man is now a good Christian and has been in this congregation several times since I have been pastor of this church.

And now I have a word to say to those who are not soldiers of the cross. My friends, Jesus wants you to enlist in his army. Won't you come to-night? During the war they used to have Examining Boards, and they would not take a man if there was anything seriously the matter with him. Everybody wanted to be sick in those days. You never heard the like of diseases in your life. Rheumatism, paralysis, palsy, heart-disease, lung trouble. The whole country was like a hospital. Men wanted to keep out of the army, on both sides. One man that I went to school with, a big strong fellow, tried to get off because he said he was subject to the croup. But in Christ's army he takes all who come, old or young, male or female, sick or well, if they put their trust in him, turn from their sins

and will be his followers. Here comes a man who says, "I am blind, I have been an infidel and an enemy to the cross." All right, come ahead. Here is another who says, "I am a poor drunkard, my nerves are shattered, my body is weak and weary." Never mind, put his name down, he will make a good soldier yet. But here is another. He says, "I am worse than all; I am a poor deserter, but love Jesus and want to serve him." Good enough. Fall in, fall in! Come, one and all, and whosoever will let him come. Yes, come to-night, and from this hour endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The war may be a long one, the battle severe, but victory will be ours at last. One night, in one of the hospitals during the war the lights were burning low, and the sick and wounded were lying in their cots. Suddenly the nurse heard one of the soldiers say HERE! He hastened to his side. "Did you want anything?" said the nurse. "No," replied the dying soldier. "I thought I heard you call. What did you say?" He looked up, the smile of joy was on his face, as he replied, "They are calling the roll in heaven and I'm answering to my name." God grant that when the last gun shall have been fired and the smoke of battle cleared away, and the shout of victory rends the skies, you and I may be there, ready to answer to our names.

THE NEW BIRTH

Ye must be born again.—*John* 3:7.

I am asking you to listen with me to a conversation which occurred between Jesus and a prominent Jewish lawyer, a ruler and a member of the Senate. It is not often that you hear of the conversion of a prominent and distinguished man. Usually such men are so taken up with the affairs of this life that they have no time for religion. I think one of the greatest revelations that we shall have hereafter will be the insignificance of the affairs of this life and the incalculable importance of the realities of the life to come. Men who have been so absorbed in business or any other earthly occupation as to shut out their loyalty, their privileges, and their duties as Christian men will see the absolute folly of the course they have pursued. We have a striking illustration of this given by our Lord himself in the man who piled up his riches, laid the flattering unction to his soul that he had made every necessary provision for his spiritual welfare by the accumulation of his wealth and left God out of the calculation. To his utter surprise God spoke and in one sentence showed him that he had traveled the wrong road, had applied his time and his talents to worthless pursuits and had made life a miserable failure. God said, "Thou fool, to-night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" We read that Nicodemus,

this distinguished citizen and prominent and influential leader among his people, came to Jesus. I can see him on his way to his office, his green bag is in his hand. He speaks here and there to citizens as he walks along. Suddenly he beholds on the other side of the street just a little ahead of him a group of people gathering close together and apparently listening intently and observing very curiously while an unusual stranger stood in their midst talking to them and performing wonderful deeds. He walked up to the outside of the crowd and looked into a face such as he had never beheld in all his life. Words of wisdom were falling from the lips of the stranger while people pressed closely upon him and hung upon his words. He saw a mother place a withered baby in his arms and receive again her child well and strong. A blind man is led to him and placing his fingers upon the blind man's eyes the sightless balls broke into light while the man himself with the face of this beautiful stranger and all the surroundings breaking upon his raptured vision shouted his joy and his gratitude. Nicodemus turns to a well-known citizen standing at his side lightly touching him on his shoulder and asks, "Who is this?" The reply was, "Why, don't you know, Senator? This is the Nazarene; this is that wonderful Jesus. This is the man who is telling us words we have never heard before and giving us hope that never entered our hearts." A poor cripple is brought and laid at the feet of this wonderful speaker. He bends over, speaks to him in tender sympathy and says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Rise. Take up thy bed and go to thy house." And the man rises and

rejoices and rushes along the street telling the people of the blessing that has come to him.

Nicodemus pursues his way, resumes his seat in the Senate. But his mind is elsewhere. I tell you when the spirit of God takes hold of the heart it is very hard to get the head to attend to any other business until the heart is set at rest. That evening as he returns to his home, the Jewish merchants close their little bazaars and stores and are sitting in the early evening shadows resting from the day's toil. The Senator speaks to one after another and by and by comes to a friend well-known, a merchant of wealth and prominence and pauses for a moment's chat with him. He introduces the subject upon his mind, "I suppose you have seen this stranger up and down the street they call Jesus?" The merchant looks up, his white head betokens many years of experience, his eyes carry interest and wisdom before he utters a word to the Senator, and then he replies, "He is a wonderful character, Senator, no doubt about that. If he is right, all of us are wrong. If we don't put him out of the way he will break up all of our habits and customs. But say what you will, he is doing wonderful things." Nicodemus replies, "I suppose the rabble are following him but no one of any particular intelligence or position." "You are wrong, Senator. Some of our very best are among his believers and our friend John is one of them." "John!" exclaims the Senator. "Why, he is one of our leading men." "Yes, as far as I can understand this Nazarene is spending the night at John's house and if I know anything I make the prediction that the whole world will be following after

him unless we can put a stop to this movement." Both were quiet for a while, and the Senator then turned and said, "Well, we will see," and went on his way. He made up his mind then and there that he would see Jesus and have a talk with him. And when he reached his home the shadows of the evening were falling and night was at hand. He said to Mrs. Nicodemus, "My dear, will you have supper a little early to-night, I want to go to the lodge?" You know we Masons have a fine way of informing our wives when we don't wish them to know where we are going. We just say the Lodge, and that is sufficient always.

One of the strangest things in the world to me, and I have never been able to solve the mystery, is that when a person becomes interested in his own soul's salvation he tries to hide it and keep it a secret from even his dearest friends. The same is true here. Nicodemus went by night because he did not want any one to see or to know the great subject that was in his mind, the burden that was upon his heart. He walked straight along up the street to John's house, took hold of the knocker on the door and announced his presence. It so happened that John himself came to the door and to his surprise saw standing before him a most prominent, sensible and influential citizen of Jerusalem. "Why, Senator," John said, "I am glad to see you. Will you come in?" "Is Jesus of Nazareth here?" "Yes, sir, I am happy to say he is and is my guest for the night. Come in and let me introduce you to him." Oh, the privilege of introducing some one to Jesus Christ. The mother introduces her child, the father his boy, the friend his friend. What an honor

it was to John to introduce Nicodemus to his own new-found Lord and Saviour. As Nicodemus enters the room he approaches Jesus with as lovely a little speech as was ever wrapped up in a single paragraph. And let me say by the way that whenever you hear men or women who are in the habit of public speaking rise and seem to give utterance to fine thoughts in an off-hand way right off the bat, it is only your impression. In reality they have thought all these things out beforehand and know perfectly well what they are going to say, depending only upon the occasion as to how it will be said. He begins: "Rabbi, Master, we know who you are." There is a little coterie of people in every community who do the thinking and who lead the acting of their fellow citizens. If some great question should suddenly arise in this city to-morrow and the town meeting should be called, you would find that the men who are in the habit of doing the thinking of the city would be the men called upon to proceed to state the reason for the meeting, to present resolutions and to offer solutions of the various problems that had arisen. So, Nicodemus, one of the thinking men of the community, had come to this conclusion and what was it? "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." Stop a minute right there. He admits that this master is a teacher while he himself belongs to the accredited teachers of his race. He is a teacher but not only so, but far above all other teachers. He is a teacher come from God, for, he continues, "No man can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Jesus paid absolutely no attention to this nice little speech. He knew what had brought this earnest

intense man, stirred to the very depths of his nature, to come to him at this hour of night and thus address him. Jesus looked him through and through at a glance and without replying at all to the address of Nicodemus, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Nicodemus might have said, "Why, Master, you are off the point. I am a parliamentarian, a man used to questions being raised, speeches made, suggestions offered. I rise to a point of order. I tell you who we think you are. You are telling me not what I am but what I must be." But he said nothing of the kind. He knew at once that the great master had sized him up. Knew that he was there seeking the way of life endeavoring to find out who and what he was. And so he fell at once to the position which Jesus had assumed. Nicodemus the Suppliant, Jesus the Saviour.

Now I am going to show you that Jesus led him into the light and that he used three illustrations in order to bring him to the point where he would find salvation. Two of these illustrations Nicodemus did not understand, but they were necessary in order that they might lead up to the third which he would readily understand and which would throw light back on the other two.

Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born again." That was the first illustration. There needs to be such a change in you, in your belief, in your spiritual condition, in your habit of life that it will be nothing short of being born again. Nicodemus does not understand it. "How," said he, "how can a man be born when he

is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Hold this illustration in your mind and let us pass to the next. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." How do you know that the wind blows? You have never seen it blow. How can you tell that it blows? Only in one way, by the result of its blowing. Your hat goes off. You know the wind is blowing. Trees bend in the air. Dust fills the street. You know that the wind is blowing. But every time it is by the results of its blowing that you know. And so it is with the works of the Spirit. He is judged alone by his results. An unbeliever becomes a believer, a result of the Spirit's work. A swearing man becomes a man of prayer and an atheist becomes a Christian. A sorrowful sinner becomes a shouting saint. A result of the Spirit's work every time.

But Nicodemus does not understand this illustration. He says, "How can these things be?" Now hold that illustration with the other in your mind and let us go on to the third. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Nicodemus was at home there. He was as familiar with the history of Israel as you and I are with the English alphabet; and when Jesus tells him that salvation is like the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, he is on common ground with his inquirer. All of us remember that incident in the wilderness, when the people of Israel were bitten

by the fiery serpents—not called fiery because they looked like fire, but because their bite so inflamed the flesh and blood of the victim that it seemed almost to set it on fire—they were called fiery serpents, and when they were bitten, they went to Moses with their complaint. Moses took the complaint to God. God told him to make a brazen serpent, to put it upon a pole, and to tell the children of Israel that if they would look up at that serpent they should live. Not that the serpent would do them any particular good, but faith in God—believing that God would do what he said he would do—that faith healed them. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "I am going to be lifted up on the cross, and the man that believes in me shall be saved; he shall be healed of his sin; his soul shall be cured of its sickness, and raised from its death." I can imagine Nicodemus saying, "Lord, is that what it means? is it like that?" Yes, Nicodemus, that is it exactly; and, my friends, that is the whole plan of salvation in a few words. We are sin-bitten—sin-poisoned; Jesus Christ is the uplifted Saviour. If we believe in him we shall live; we shall not perish.

I believe that Nicodemus saw the matter in its true light then. We hear no more of him, except on two occasions in the gospels: once, when the officers were sent to arrest Jesus, they returned, saying, "Never man spake like this man." The Pharisees said, "Are ye also deceived? have any of the rulers believed on him?" Nicodemus said, "Doth our law judge any man before it heareth him, and know what he doeth?" They say to him, "Art thou also of Galilee?" Nicodemus did have some love in his heart for Jesus, and he stood

firm that day in his defense, though he was afraid to confess his Saviour. How much more noble it would have been, if he had said, "Yes, I believe on him. I am a ruler, and I believe on him. He is my Saviour. Now, if you wish to put me out of your Sanhedrin, put me out; I believe on him, and I belong to him; he is my Lord and my King." But no; like some others who lived then, and who live now, he was a disciple of Jesus, but kept it to himself. The next time we hear of him is at the cross. He is there with Joseph—another secret disciple. They came to take the body down from the cross, and, no doubt, Nicodemus said to him, "Joseph, he told me it would be this way. That night, when I sat with him in John's house in Jerusalem, asking what I must do to be saved, he told me that he would be lifted up in this way. Handle him tenderly, Joseph; take him down carefully; let us lift him cautiously; he is our blessed Lord—Our Saviour."

There are two strong points to be presented here: Sin and its Remedy. We have all received the poison of sin in our nature; we need the only remedy—the Blood of Jesus Christ; and yet people make so many excuses for not accepting the remedy. People are so careless and indifferent; they will not bring their friends who are perishing in their sins; they will not go out after them and bring them to the blessed Saviour. It was not so in Israel's camp. When the man was bitten by the serpent, I have no doubt his neighbors all joined in to get him in sight of the uplifted serpent on the pole. Why, I see mothers running from tent to tent and saying to other mothers,

"I heard that your child had been bitten by the fiery serpent; do you not know that there is a remedy in the camp, and that it will cure the bite?" The anxious mother looks up through her tears, and as she wrings her hands, she says, "Why, no, I did not hear of the remedy; what is it? where is it? Oh, help me take my boy that I may save his life!" And the mothers get together and take the boy out of the tent, and turn his face in the direction of the brazen serpent. He looks and lives!

Mothers, have you any boys to save? If you have none of your own, will you not go out and help other mothers to save their boys? There is a noble woman living here in Baltimore, who lost her son some time ago. She stood, one Sunday afternoon, on Baltimore Street, despondent—heart-broken. She felt that there was nothing for her in this world; everything was dark. As she stood there, looking upon the bright young men who passed along the street, now and then she heard an oath; now and then she a saw a young man staggering under the effect of intoxicating drink! Said she, "There is something for me to live for yet. If my own dear boy has gone, there are other boys, and I can help their mothers save them." From that day to this, like a good mother in Israel, she has been going from home to home, telling others of the only Saviour, and assisting them in bringing their boys to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What would you think of the man, half dead from the serpent's bite, who would say, "I don't think there is anything in just looking at a serpent. If you could bring it here and lay it on this wound, it might draw

the poison out; but for me just to look at it, I don't see how that will do any good." Why, you would say that the poison of the serpent had gotten into the man's brain, and he had lost his reason; and yet this is the very way that some of you who hear me are thinking in your hearts. "I do not see," you will say, "how just believing in the Lord Jesus Christ will save my soul. If you could bring him to me, and let him make me over again,—let him take away these evil desires, these wicked thoughts, this tendency to sin,—then I might be saved; but just to believe in him—I cannot see how that will do me any good." Yes, but, friend, it is not for you to say; it is yours to believe and to do. The people of Israel were told that if they would look at that serpent, they should live. They believed the man of God who told them this. They looked, and they did live. This is the application of the blessed remedy of heaven: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and it is our faith in him that saves the soul forever.

Look again at that text. Why was he lifted up? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish." We shall perish if we do not believe in him. The poison is in our veins, and it holds such enmity to the souls of men that the soul cannot live in contact with the poison. We must be cured or perish; it is unavoidable. As sure as we live, as sure as our hearts beat, as sure as we breathe the breath of life to-day, we shall perish in our sins, unless we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept him, and him alone, as the antidote for this poison that is in our spiritual natures.

Once again let me call your attention to that broad, big, glorious word: "WHOSOEVER." A man came to me sometime ago, and said: "I want to thank you for preaching, several years ago, on the word 'Whosoever.'" Said he: "I came into the Lord's service under that word." You know it has been said, time and again, that some old preacher, in old times, said that he would rather have God put that word "whosoever" in there than his own name; because, if it had been his name, he would have been afraid that there was somebody else of that name; but when it is written "whosoever," that means every one. A superintendent of a penitentiary in this country, sometime ago, when he had all the convicts drawn up in line, said: "Jeremiah Brown will please step to the front; I have a pardon for him." Not a man moved! He called out again: "Jeremiah Brown will step to the front; I have his pardon." Not a soul moved. Men who were standing near Brown touched him, and said: "Why don't you step out, Brown? There is your pardon, man." He said: "That doesn't mean me; there is somebody else here by that name"; and the superintendent had to walk down the line, lay his hand on the man's shoulder, and say to him: "Here it is for you; step out; you are free!" There was joy in that man's heart.

And so, my friends, after all this world-wide discussion over the new birth and the strange dispersion on the work of the Spirit which have puzzled multitudes and bewildered many may be put into this one sentence: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have

everlasting life." If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, you have been born again. The spirit has done its work. You are God's child. Your name is written in the Book of Life and there is no power that can break the tie that binds you to the heart of him who loved us and gave himself for us.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSSESSIONS

All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's.—*I Cor.* 3:21-23.

It is a common opinion in this world, that when a person becomes a Christian, he gives up everything that is of any value, and gains nothing worth having. He gives up all hope of having a good time here, for a promise of a good time hereafter. Exactly the opposite is true. He gives up nothing that is worth having, and gains everything that can make this life a blessing; and all the joys of heaven when this life is over.

I think the reason why we Christians are not happier and stronger and more useful is because we do not consider who we are and what we have. There is not a business man here, who cannot come pretty close to what he is worth. If he is well off, it makes him feel strong and comfortable. If he doesn't know what he is worth, he ought to take an account of stock. Let us look over it this morning, and, God helping us, we shall find out something of the Christian's wealth. May the consideration of this subject make better Christians of us all, and may it constrain those who are not Christians to seek this wondrous wealth at once.

All Things Are Yours.—What a sweeping declaration that is! I take God at his word. I think he

means just what he says. Now look at the account. Examine it item by item, and see what the Lord has done for our souls—see how rich we are.

WHETHER PAUL, OR APOLLOS, OR CEPHAS.—That is the first item. The Ministry is yours. He enters the cheapest article on the list first. The Ministry is a part of the Christian's possessions. I think those Corinthian brethren had had a falling out about preachers. One said, "I am of Paul—I like him. He gives me sound doctrine, good logic, strong argument, he feeds me on the meat and bread of the gospel." Another said, "I am of Apollos. Apollos is an orator. He takes me to the very skies upon the wings of his eloquence. Paul puts me to sleep with his long weary argument." (There are some people whose minds are not strong enough to keep awake all through a good sermon, you know, so if any of you go to sleep this morning, I will excuse you.) "Let me know when Apollos preaches in Corinth, and I am going to church. Give me Apollos, first, last and all the time." Then a dear old sister comes up and says, "I would rather hear Cephas than both of them put together. Cephas makes me cry, he touches my heart, he thrills my soul, bless his dear soul, he knows what trouble is, and he comforts my heart. I want Cephas, I do."

"Well, but," says Paul, "they are ALL yours. All the preachers are yours." We preach Christ Jesus and are ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. The highest office on this earth, is the office of the man whom God has called to be the servant of the churches. You come together on Sunday to receive what he has gathered for you during the week. If you are sick, you

want him to come and minister to your comfort, and if a loved one dies, nobody can take the place of your pastor. You must have him come and speak a word of comfort to your soul. The saddest time when we lose our loved ones is not when they speak the parting word; it is not when we lay them in the grave—the saddest time is when we come back to the desolate, empty home, and listen for that well-known voice, and the coming of those feet, but listen in vain, with blighted life and broken heart. Then it is that you want your pastor, and you thank God that the ministry is yours.

But let us look at the second item in the account. THE WORLD is yours. Indeed? Why, I always heard we had to give up the world when we became Christians. Now, he says the world is ours. What does this mean? It means just what it says. The world is ours. The devil never told a bigger lie, than when he said to Jesus that the world had been given to him. Not one inch of it is his. He is an intruder here, and there is a great war going on to drive him out, and take possession of our territory, which he has disgraced and ruined. This is our Father's world, and we are in it to win it back from Satan, and lift it up out of the darkness of despair and death into light, and everlasting life.

Ah, brother, sister, do you remember how much more beautiful this world looked to you the morning after you were converted? The trees, the rivers, the mountains, the sea, the bright skies above you, all your Father's, and you his child. A good Christian woman, who lived in Washington City, told me

about the conversion of her husband. He had been raised under the influence of strong Calvinistic doctrine, and believed that revival meetings and all work of that sort were man's work, or the devil's, he wasn't certain which, and so he wouldn't have anything to do with them. One night, while the meetings were going on, the old lady and her daughters were at church, and the old man stayed at home. He told them he would rather they would go to a ball than to such a place as that. She was asking prayer, for him. When they got back that night, she saw him slip a book that he was reading under the coverlet of the lounge. She waited until he went out, and ran over to see what book it was, and blessed be God it was the Bible. Well, she said it was as much as she could do to keep from shouting. Next night at supper table, he said, "Are you all going to meeting to-night?" They said yes. By and by, when they started, the old man went along too. After the sermon the invitation was given, and the old gentleman was first to rise. Don't you know that sister was happy? She said when she got home, she just threw her arms around his neck, and said, "My husband, thirty-three long years have I prayed for this hour. Glory to God!" Next morning, the old brother was standing in the dining-room just before breakfast, looking out at the window. It was dead of winter, and a dark cloudy day, and he was looking at the old leafless trees standing in the back yard. Presently he said, "Wife, come here, just come here." "Why," she said, "what do you see, husband?" "Just come here," he said, "come here, *the very trees are clapping their hands in praise to God!*" Well, that's

what the Lord says about it. "The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." The world is ours to live in, and enjoy, and bless it, and leave it better when we go away from it, than it was when we found it, because we *have* lived in it.

LIFE is yours.—What is life? I do not call it life, to be standing here talking to you, and an hour from now be a corpse. I do not call that life. I call that life which knows no death. Life that never ends—a cross over whose ever brightening path no shadow ever falls. That is life, and that is what God gives us. Three old ladies were talking together, and one of them said, "Sisters, suppose all the Bibles were about to be destroyed, and you were allowed to take one verse out, which would you take?" "I don't know," said one; "it is all so good, I wouldn't know which to take." "I know which I would take," said the other,—"'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I would take that." Yes, and so would I. Oh, friend, if you believe in Jesus Christ and have accepted him as your Saviour, life is yours, everlasting life. And it is yours now. You have already come into possession of the glorious gift, and have passed from death unto life.

DEATH is yours.—Now, that is something we could afford to do without. We have always been taught to fear death. And well we may. It has made sad havoc with us all. There is not a heart here that has not felt its shock. Oh, how it destroys our hopes, desolates our homes, and breaks us up entirely. And yet death

is ours. Jesus Christ came down here and met death, captured him and chained him to his chariot. And when death comes to the Christian, he can only come as a servant, and say, "Child, your Father says come up here and be with him." Death is ours. Suppose your child had gone over to a neighbor's house, and been slapped two or three times, and fought over and beaten by the other children, and torn to pieces by the dogs, would he be glad, or sorry, when the servant came to take him home? That's the way it is with us, we have been knocked down and run over by affliction, kicked about by misfortune, and torn to pieces so by the devil, that when our servant death comes we shall throw our arms around his neck, and beg him hasten our journey home. Death is ours if we are Christians, but if not, then woe be unto us, for he is to those who are out of Christ, the king of terrors, the sorrow of sorrows. If you are not a Christian to-day, fly to Jesus, and in making him your Saviour you make death your prisoner. But we must pass on to another item. It gets better and better.

THINGS PRESENT are yours.—I was standing one day, in Killarney, a little village in Ireland, talking with a Presbyterian preacher who lived there, and saw a man coming along with no clothing, but something like a blanket tied around him, no hat, and pieces of sole leather under his feet for shoes. I asked what it meant, and was told that religion consisted wholly in self-denial. Now, I don't believe anything of the kind. God has surrounded his children with blessings, and he wants us to enjoy them. It pleases him when we do enjoy them, and it makes us better Christians.

Kindness and goodness will win a brute, much more, a human being. The mightiest appeal that the Apostle makes for consecration is upon the ground of God's goodness. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by *the mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is this that draws us near the Father. I believe a man might have preached hell and damnation to me until his head was white, and he never could have frightened me into the Kingdom. It was love. I was a poor, lost soul, and I heard the voice of Jesus saying, "Come to me, thou poor, weary one, and I will help you." I did come, and he helped me, and his love is in my life day by day. Truly can I say with Paul, "The love of Christ constraineth me." Things present are ours. Child of God, enjoy the things present; you will have to leave them soon. Thank God for them, and use them for your happiness and his glory. One of the sweetest recollections I have of my loved ones in heaven, is that while I had them here I loved them with all my heart. My Father took them and gave me other blessings, and so he does with us all.

Things to Come are yours.—This is the last and the best. Things to come! Oh, who can tell how much is wrapped up in those three short words. Things to come—heaven and all that heaven contains. Let me mention two or three of the things to come. We shall see the day when we shall be free from sin. That is one of the things to come. Not a sinful deed, or word, or thought. The gates of heaven closed, Satan and sin shut out, you shut in. Yes, and free

from trouble, too. Not a pain, not a tear, not a sigh. We sing that old hymn sometimes:

"There shall I bathe my weary soul,
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll,
Across my peaceful breast."

But we shall realize it then. Another one of the things to come, is the resurrection morning. We shall see them as they rise from their lowly beds. Mother, father, sister, brother, child, companion, friend, but best of all, we shall see some whom we have led to Jesus. What a happy time it will be! But the most glorious thing of all the things to come, is, we shall see Jesus. A blind man went feeling his way down the street one day, and an eye doctor met him. The oculist stopped the blind man and looked at his eyes, and told him he could restore his sight. He took the man's number, called on him, and cut the cataract off of both eyes, and told them to keep him in a dark room a certain number of days. When the time was out, they took the bandages off and raised the curtains. The man opened his eyes and shut them again right away. "Go bring the Doctor," he said, "I don't want to see anything or anybody until I look upon him first of all, the man that opened my eyes." Presently the doctor came, and the man that was blind looked and looked at him, and thanked him, and cried like a child. And that's the way it will be with us. Oh, we want to see Jesus—the one who came so far, and waited so long, and reached so low, and lifted us up out of the mire and clay, and set our feet on the rock. We want

to get down at his feet, and look up into that blessed face, and see him smile on a soul that was lost, but now redeemed forever. Things to come are ours.

There is only one thing in the whole account that is not ours. All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, only one thing not yours, YE ARE CHRIST'S. And I am glad of it. I am glad we are not our own. Let me make two remarks on this point. If we are Christ's we ought to be busy for him. Never mind about results. It is a good thing where we can see results, and gather fruits. It is hard to sow the seed and then weep over a fruitless field. But never mind. Are you working for Jesus? If so, you are doing well, and in due season you shall reap. Ye are not your own; be busy for him who has bought you with his blood.

My other remark is this: If we are Christ's, we never can be lost. Blessed truth! When the tempter comes, we can say, "Satan, you must settle this with Jesus, I belong to him. I had a dear old brother in my congregation once, who was gradually dying of cancer. I used to go in and see him every day or two. He was always happy. One night a short time before he died, his daughter heard him singing late in the night. She went in and said, "Pa, what in the world are you singing about, here this time of night?" "My child," said the old saint, "Jesus is having a fight with the devil over my soul, and I am singing while my Saviour whips him out." Yes, if we are Christ's, we can go through the world singing, for we surely shall be saved. A friend of mine from North Carolina,

tells of an incident that occurred down there. One morning a gentleman was standing in his yard about daylight. He heard a pack of hounds running near by, and stood listening to the music, as the forest rang with the sound. Presently he heard a noise in the bushes near by, and a little fawn jumped out. Its sides were black with the sweat of the race; there it stood, trembling from head to foot. The dogs were right behind it. The little thing ran to the man and laid down at his feet. He just stepped in between the little deer and the hounds, and fought them off right and left; he said he would have died before he would have let the mouth of one of those dogs touch the helpless little refugee that lay at his feet. And so it was, my fellow Christians, with you and me. Weary and worn, and heartsick, the dogs of hell at our heels, we fell at the feet of Jesus, and he stands to-day between us and danger. We are his and he is ours. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's.

HE BROUGHT HIS BROTHER

He brought him to Jesus.—*John* 1 : 42.

If we are disciples of Jesus, our heart's desire and prayer to God, is for the conversion of souls. If this can be accomplished, evil will be overcome and good take its place. Convert the world and hell will be conquered and Jesus reign victorious. Then will his kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven; but to do this is no child's play. It is *work—real earnest* WORK. For this purpose our Saviour came into the world, and he called it *work*. "We must *work* the *works* of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh." It cost him dearly; all that he had. Pain, labor, blood, life, all were endured and sacrificed for this great work.

The hearts of men are surrounded by fortifications which seem well nigh impregnable. The devil has thrown up his breastworks and occupies them with all his forces. These must be stormed and taken. And then when the heart is reached, we find it unwilling to receive the gospel. We find it hardened in sin, chilled by prejudice, charmed by worldly pleasures and in its very nature opposed to accepting the blessings that we bring. As the mother who fights her way through difficulties and dangers to recover her lost child, finds, when she reaches the loved object of her search, that her child is indifferent to her entreaties and refuses to own her as a mother, or return with her to her home,

so Jesus when he came into this world: "came to his own and his own received him not," and so it is oftentimes with us when we offer him to others. But the enemy must be overcome, the fortifications taken, prejudices broken down, the affections and desires changed, the heart won to Christ. *Souls must be converted,* and this, I repeat, is *work,* and that work is to be done in *two ways,* namely: *General Work,* or that which includes the preaching of the gospel from the pulpit, the writing of books, or publication of religious literature in general; and *Special* or *Personal* work or that which is done by personal contact with men. It is upon this last branch of Christian effort that I am to speak to you—*personal work and how to do it.*

My first point will be, *The necessity of personal work,* and then I will proceed to the more practical part of my subject: *How to do it.*

1. The necessity arises out of the very nature of man. There is a power in personal contact with men. Sheet lightning can do no harm; it is the bolt that strikes. If a circular letter is sent around, headed "To the Public," it is read by few, and attended to by less; but if you go to a man's door and call him out and talk to him on the same subject mentioned in the letter which he has thrown into his waste basket, the effect is very different. Personal appeal makes men *think* and *act.* It leaves them no door of escape. A man who captured seven soldiers during the war was asked how he did it. "I surrounded them," he replied. So it is here, we can surround a man and capture him for our King.

2. Experience sustains this view. Show me the

church that does not depend solely on its pastor, but has men and women engaged in *personal work,* and I will show you a prosperous church. Many of you were brought to Christ by this means, and many more will come after you in the same way.

3. But why need we multiply arguments when one will settle all? It is the *Lord's plan.* He thought this whole subject through; surveyed the whole field, and then laid the plan of personal work. He is the Good Shepherd, and represents himself as bringing the sheep home, not in flocks, but one at a time, and rejoicing in his work. How he preaches to Nicodemus, and how he pleads with the woman of Samaria; calls Matthew as he goes along, and pauses before Bartimæus to bestow his blessings. His disciples followed his example. "Jesus findeth Philip, Philip findeth Nathanael; Andrew found his brother, and brought him to Jesus." With such facts before us we cannot question the *necessity* of personal work. It follows, therefore, that we must do it, and we are brought now to the all-important inquiry HOW TO DO IT.

This is a hard question to answer. May God the Holy Spirit help us to answer it aright!

I would say, generally, *any* and *every* way that we can work to bring men to Jesus is the right way. "All things to all men, that I might by all means save some," was Paul's motto. When the devil goes a hunting he does not care whether he catches his game in a trap or net, shoots or runs it down with the dogs, so he gets it. Shall we be less wise than he? Let him not get ahead of you, but seek in all honorable ways the conversion of souls; this we must have, we cannot be

contented with less. But let us enter into the details of our toils. The work is arduous and delicate. We must labor with all our might, and yet one careless stroke may spoil the picture. Let us mark out then a plan, nay, *the* plan, *the very best plan* by which our personal work shall be successful.

1. First of all, *we must have the Holy Ghost.* Without him we can do nothing. We shall be like moths around the candle without him, but with him like the Hebrew children in the furnace. If he be absent we shall tremble like Peter when frightened by the Jewish girl, but if present we shall preach like Peter at Pentecost. Tarry for the Spirit. Unless you are converted, you need not hope to be instrumental in the conversion of others. You must find the way to Calvary yourself before you try to show others the blessed road. Besides, we shall need the Spirit in our conflict with sin and Satan, both of which stand between us and every unconverted soul. And then, he alone can cleanse and purify the heart and make it love what it hated and hate what it loved. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts."

2. *We must be men of prayer.* Our Father gives the Holy Spirit "to every one that asketh him." We must have communion with God. Prayer brings us near the throne, near the warm heart of Jesus. It warms our hearts and makes us live men. Vincent Ferrier said such sweet things in his sermons that some one asked of his members why it was. "We think," said they, "it is because he lives so near the gates of heaven that he hears things that never come

to our ears." If we are men of prayer, we shall be men of faith and love and zeal.

3. *Know the Bible.* If we are going to fight with the sword of the Spirit let us be familiar with its use. It is sharp, two-edged and not to be handled carelessly, but used aright it is quick and powerful. Be at home with this blade of the Lord and you will do the work, and do it well. With such preparation as this; the presence of the Spirit, the power of prayer, and a practical knowledge of the Scriptures, you will not have to mourn over empty nets, and fruitless fields, but go up to God rejoicing, bearing your sheaves with you. The preparation, however, is only preliminary to the actual work for which we are now ready. A man may enter the harvest field with strong arm, stout heart and glittering scythe, but all that will not gather the golden grain if he does not work; he must put in the sickle with sturdy arm and steady stroke.

4. *Be cautious in approaching men.* The wheat cutter does not walk right into the grain and trample it under his feet, nor does he stand so far off that he cannot reach it. Some persons who would like to win souls, rush in like a young pointer into a covey of birds, only to frighten them away. We must be careful, wise, discreet. Be like the old trained setter; find your game, approach it carefully, take your stand, then say, "Now, Lord, FIRE." Be wise in introducing the subject. Many circumstances will help you, best of all the Spirit will guide you.

5. *Let your conversation be seasoned with love.* Let your fellow mortal see that you love him, love his soul. Nothing has more power over the human

heart than love. Did not love bring Christ to us, and us to Christ? You will surely get a patient hearing when love is the petitioner.

6. *Get on common ground* with the one whose soul you seek. "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." Perhaps he is fighting the same battle you have fought, or goes over the same road you have traveled. You will be surprised how close sympathy will bring you together. Show him how you got out of the trouble, and he will follow you.

7. *Tell him his condition,* plainly, lovingly. Speak the truth in love. A good old brother once said, "It is useless to try to sew with the silken thread of the gospel until you have pierced the way with the sharp needle of the law." This will prepare you for the next, but very pleasing task.

8. *"Preach unto him Jesus."* I need not tell you how this should be done. Your own heart will tell you that. The Spirit of God will guide you. It is his special work. "He shall take of the things which are mine and show them unto you." But your work even then will probably not be complete, for *you must answer objections and remove doubts and difficulties.* Infidelity, so-called philosophy, false science, depraved nature and the devil all combine to suggest doubts and difficulties to the soul. Do not lose your patience. Remember how patient your Lord has been with you. Meet these troubles with a brave heart, and victory will repay your toil. When you knock the last prop from under them they will fall. Whip them out of the last ditch, they will surrender. Besiege them until they

yield, horse, foot and dragoon, and then give all the praise to God.

Taking for granted that you win the soul, *urge him at once to enter the great work.* The best thing for the Christian is work. If he is not busy for the Lord, the devil will be busy with him. "Harness unworn becomes rusty." I once heard of a minister who lost all his usefulness by becoming suddenly rich, (which, by the way, through the mercy of God is a very rare occurrence) and soon would not so much as ask a blessing on his food. "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," says the old proverb, and it has not lost any of its truth on account of age. If you want to find a Christian that walks on the heavenly heights it is he who, by hard work, has climbed the steep sides of the celestial mountains. We cannot keep warm by hovering over a few dying embers, we must go forth and work, if we would have the blood bounding through every artery and our bodies in a glow of heat. Then harness the colts as soon as you have broken them in, and they will be fiery, faithful steeds to draw the chariot of the Lord.

In conclusion, *our work must be done.* It is hard but we have help: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is pleasant, for what more joyful task than winning souls for Jesus. It has its regards; here, and hereafter. To stand at that day in the presence of the King, holding the hand of some fellow mortal that I have rescued from ruin eternal will be heaven indeed for me. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?"

And then we shall hear the Master say "Well done," and that will be worth all our sacrifice and sorrows, toils and cares. To the work then, my brothers. "For they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever," and may God be with you is my prayer for Jesus' sake.

PREACH THE WORD

If the trumpet give forth an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?—*I Cor.* 14: 8.

Paul seems to have been very fond of taking his illustrations from military life, and very reasonably so, for they are quick, lively and impressive. You find him writing to Timothy, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; and again, when speaking of his own life, he said, "I have fought the good fight." When urging Christians to prepare for the service of their Lord, he tells them to "Put on the whole armor of God"; and in the text we have another illustration from military life, "If the trumpet give forth an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" In other words, if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached in its fullness and plainness the people will not be prepared for the great battle of life. In these days men have been beating the bushes trying to stir up some other kind of game than that which it is our business to follow. If you could telephone to heaven to-day and ask the blessed Lord himself what you must preach next Sunday or any other time, his answer would be "Preach" the Word. Some years ago there was an English officer in the army who was examined by several surgeons and physicians and was told that the malady from which he suffered was fatal and he could only live six months, at the farthest. His discharge was given him at once and he went to his home.

He had not been there long before he called in his father's family physician and laughingly said to him, "They have given me a discharge from the army but they don't know what is the matter with me, and they say I have but a short time to live. I do not believe anything of the kind but I have come home to stay a while and I just thought I would ask you to make an examination of me and give me your opinion." The faithful family physician made a thorough and careful examination and said to the young man, "Shall I tell you plainly my opinion?" His answer was, "Yes, let me have it." "Well," said he, "you have only a month to live. It is impossible that you can exist any longer with your disease which is utterly incurable doing its deadly work in your system. There is absolutely no remedy." The man turned deathly pale and said, "Doctor, can there be no mistake?" The doctor steadily shook his head and said, "None whatever. The men who examined you in the army knew better, but they were only breaking the news to you gently." I will give you a few sentences taken from this officer's diary which will explain better than I can his situation. "I had an engagement to-day to go to the races, but why should a man wish to see the races with only one month to live?

"I was walking along the street to-day and turned into a tailor shop. He asked me if I wanted a suit of clothes and was ready to try it on me. At first I said, 'Yes,' and then I asked, 'Why should a man want a new suit of clothes and only one month to live?'

"When I came home to-night I found an invitation to a banquet to be given within a few days to a dis-

tinguished man of this town, and I accepted, but why should I wish to go to a banquet when I have only one month to live.

"To-day I was passing a book store and went in and bought a Bible for I want to see what preparation I can make since I have only a month to live.

"Sunday, not being able to find satisfaction in reading the Bible, I went to two different churches and heard two preachers. One of them was preaching on the subject of Philosophy and the other on Evolution, but what good does that do when I am longing to know how I may prepare for my death which is so near at hand? No one seems to be able to tell me what I must do to be saved.

"I am on a visit in a neighboring city to my home and spent the night at a hotel. This morning the bootblack came into my room and while he was shining my boots, I said to him, 'What ought a man to do who has less than a month to live?' The bootblack looked up and said, 'The first thing, sir, is to get ready to go.' 'But,' I replied, 'I can't find any one who can tell me how to get ready.' "

You see the trumpets were giving further uncertain sounds and the poor fellow was not able to prepare to meet the last great enemy which is death. "The bootblack continued, 'I am ready, sir, and every man ought to be ready every day for that which may come to him any day.' 'Yes, but,' I answered, 'how can I get ready quickly?' The youth said, 'But you trust in Jesus Christ, he is the Saviour of all men, and whosoever will call upon him.' 'Still,' I insisted, 'I do not know how to do that.' 'Oh, well,' replied he, 'if you

will take the word from a poor shiner of boots I can tell you.' I said, 'Surely I will take the word if you will only tell me.' He laid aside his brush and the boot that he had in his hand and said to me, 'I must ask you, sir, if you please, to get out of bed and kneel down by my side and we will talk to the Lord himself about this.' I paused a moment and then rose and attempted to get out of bed when I stopped and said, 'Do you reckon it is worth while?' 'Oh, yes,' said he, 'there is no other way; you must humble yourself before him and plead for his forgiveness and he will surely give it to you.' A moment later I was kneeling at the side of the simple-hearted bootblack and when his prayer was done I took him by the hand and said, 'You have shown me the way, I am not afraid now to go, because I am trusting that same Saviour that you are looking to for salvation, and I know I am ready to go.' You see the boy had the truth in him and gave it to the man in his own simple way, and God, blessed be his Spirit, saved the soul. 'If the trumpet give forth an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?' "

Now let us enlarge our thoughts and give consideration to the battle as well as the preparation for it. Let us think first of the battle; second, that not many are preparing themselves for the battle; third, the cause of this.

First, then, let us direct our thoughts to the battle. In casting your eye over Christendom you are not struck with the aptness of this figure, for it does not seem as if a battle were going on in this world; but then, we must remember that we do not scan the whole

field, nor are we permitted to review all of the armies engaged. We see only those who are in the flesh—God's chosen instruments on earth—as the connecting link between himself and our fallen race. We see only our fellow-men; but if our eyes could be opened, in my opinion, we should see others engaged, and their quick movements and desperate zeal would fill us at once with amazement and awe. We should then see, not only preparation to the battle, but the battle itself raging in great power. When Elisha was at Dothan, and the young man said to him that the enemy had surrounded them, the old prophet asked the Lord to open the young man's eyes that he might see; and the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw the very air around him filled with chariots and the hosts of heaven.

But there are many points of resemblance between the cause of Christ, in which we are engaged in this world, and the battle. The battle is a place of great responsibilities. Every man bears a burden of duty that is very heavy in any conflict. When General Washington addressed his soldiers before the battle of Long Island, he said to them: "The fate of unborn millions may now depend, under God, upon the conduct and courage of this army. Our own, our country's honor calls upon us for vigorous and manly exertion, and if we now shamefully fail, we shall become infamous to the whole world. Let every good soldier be silent, and attentive; wait for orders, and reserve his fire until he is sure of doing execution." Great generals in our earthly armies call upon men, and assure them of their individual responsibilities. It is that way in Christ's army; every man and woman and child,

in this great struggle, bears an awful responsibility, to himself, his fellow-men and to God.

Again, the battle is the place for immediate action. No time is to be lost when the fight is going on. Some of the greatest battles that history records were won or lost by the failure of certain men to come to time at the very hour when they were needed. And in this battle of Christ against the leaders of the army of Satan there is not time to be lost. Men are perishing around us; souls that we know to-day may to-morrow be in eternity; and so we are called upon for urgent and immediate work. On one occasion, I was called upon to preach in a Presbyterian Church in a neighboring state. As I entered the pulpit a thought came into my heart: "There may be some here to-night whose only opportunity of salvation will be afforded by the message that I am to deliver," and with that thought uppermost in my mind I tried to preach the Word. A few days afterwards I heard that a bright young man, who was in the congregation that night, had been drowned. His mother assured me that the only hope she had of his salvation was a remark he made to her on the night that he attended the service at the Presbyterian Church, in which he expressed a deep feeling as to the salvation of his soul. You know not when the opportunity may be given to rescue a perishing fellow-mortal.

Furthermore, the battle is the place where great issues are decided, and the battle in which we are engaged is the one in which the cause of heaven against the cause of the great adversary of our souls must be won or lost. The Captain of our salvation marches at

the head of his army, and calls upon us to follow him. Let us go into the thickest of the fight and do our duty, at all hazards. So, then, you see that in the contest that is being waged in this world between right and wrong—God and the Devil, Heaven and Hell—there is a strong resemblance to a battle with which the people of this country are only too familiar by the sad experience of recent years.

The second thought to which I would direct your attention is the sad truth that comparatively very few are preparing to the battle. Looking in our own land: we call this a "Christian land"; it is known as a God-fearing people; and yet, it is not a Christian land. The great majority of the people do not even attend the places where God is worshiped. And if you were, to-day, to select out of this great country of ours those who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, you would have a small remnant indeed. And, then, if you would select from those the number actually and actively engaged in the battle, you would find only a handful, as was the case when Gideon led the three hundred against the hosts of Midian. I have found this the case in visiting the different churches in this country. Let the pastor announce to his church that he is about to enter into a protracted meeting; let him call upon his members, those who are willing, to go out and work for the Lord; let him ask the men and women, "Who will make sacrifices—will leave their business—will go from house to house and warn men to flee from the 'Wrath to come'?" Let him call the rich, and ask those who are willing to stand by him in the fight, to step out from the ranks. How many do

you suppose he would have? Hardly a "corporal's guard!" And yet, in such meetings, it is needful that we should have every one engaged in the conflict. It is too often the case that the whole church, with but few exceptions, stands off, and permits the pastor and a handful to do the work.

My friends, I believe that the best work is personal effort. It is when we go in, and determine that we will not leave the battlefield until we have won a soul for Christ. During the war there was a raw recruit who had just been enlisted in one of the companies. They went into the fight, and when the battle was at its hottest they were ordered to charge. But, in the midst of the smoke and dust, they were ordered back. The raw recruit did not hear the order, but went forward. The first man that he met, he took him by the collar and brought him out, and when he reached the other soldiers who were lying behind a fence, he said to them, "Boys, what made you come back? If you had gone on, every one of you might have gotten a fellow as I did." This is the way which Christ has chosen to fight the Devil—individual effort on the part of his soldiers—and yet how few are engaged in the struggle.

Then take a look at the work in foreign lands. About one missionary for every million of people would be a very fair average. So you see, that though it is a sad truth, it is yet sadly true that very few are preparing themselves to the battle. And those who have prepared themselves, and seem to have enlisted in this earnest war, spend more of their time in playing than in fighting. Sometime ago I was in Prospect

Park, Brooklyn, New York, on the anniversary of Washington's birthday. A sham battle was going on. Soldiers were marching in every direction, drums were beating, guns were firing, and yet no blood was spilled, no prisoners were captured. It was a sham battle. And it seems to me that this is very much the case in our battle that we are waging to-day for the salvation of the souls of men.

And now let us consider the leading thought of the text: the reason why so few are preparing themselves for the battle.

It is because the trumpet gives an "uncertain sound." The preachers are the trumpeters. They are the watchmen upon the walls of Zion, whose business it is to call the Christian soldiers to the fight; and I arraign myself with all the rest when I say that too often the trumpets give forth an "uncertain sound." I was sitting one day in the back room of a country store, in the neighborhood where I was pastor of a church. An old colored man came in, and asked me if there was a letter for him—for the post-office was kept there. I said to him that I was not the postmaster, but was the minister in the neighborhood. He looked up, and said: "Oh, yes, sir, you are the new preacher here. I have been a long time wanting to talk with you, sir. I wanted to ask you a question." "Well," said I, "uncle, I will answer it, if I can." He said, "I wanted to ask you, sir, if education makes a preacher, or does the Spirit of the Lord make the preacher?" I replied, that I thought the Spirit of the Lord made the preacher. "That is what I have been telling them, sir. I try to preach sometimes, but a young man has lately come

into our neighborhood, and he has been telling the people that education makes the preacher, and a good many are running off after him because he preaches pretty sermons; but I tell them that it ain't education, but the Lord's Spirit. The way I look at it, sir, is this: you may take a horn, and take it in your hands, and it won't give any sound unless you put it to your lips, and put your breath into it; and I think we preachers are nothing but clay horns in the Lord's hands, and we won't give forth the right sound unless the Lord puts his lips to us, and puts his breath into us. Was I right in this, sir?" I said, "Uncle, I think you are exactly right." It is the Lord's breath in man that gives forth the certain sound. Sometimes we find these gospel trumpeters only playing a pretty tune, when they should be preaching the Word of the Lord. The people go home and say, "That was a beautiful sermon; it was flowery and poetical, and entertaining," but what soldier will prepare himself to the battle if the trumpeter merely plays a tune instead of sounding the charge? Then, sometimes the trumpeters are only practicing. At one of our theological seminaries, some years ago, it was the custom of the young preachers to go and preach to the colored people. You know it is an old adage: "Read 'Butler's Analogy,' and preach to the colored people, if you wish to succeed as a preacher"; but it does not require education to detect the "uncertain sound." A good old colored brother, listening to one of these students, was called upon to pray. He said, "We thank thee, O Lord, for the Bible, for the plain words of thy truth. We pray that thou wilt bless the word, and, O Lord, we pray that thou

wilt bless this young preacher who has come down here to practice upon us!"

Again, sometimes we hardly know what note the trumpeter is sounding. We sit and listen, and try to catch some word of comfort, but the words that come are so uncertain, so equivocal, that the sheep look up, but are not fed. Then, too, we seem to have departed from the old ways in failing to declare the doctrines of grace as laid down in the Word of God. Where is the pulpit that gives forth the certain sound upon the common sins of the day?—and, especially, that great curse of our churches, worldliness? There is an "uncertain sound" upon the sins of society: dram-drinking, theater-going, card-playing, and all such sins and worldliness are tolerated, to say the least. Brethren, if we would be faithful, we must preach against worldliness. It is no excuse to say, that if we preach against it our people will go off to other churches. Let them go; it would be far better to have ten good soldiers, who will stand in front of the enemy and fight until they fall, than to have ten thousand men who run at the first fire. If men are not preparing themselves to the battle to-day, it is because the preachers of God's truth—the gospel trumpeters—give forth an "uncertain sound."

But the trouble does not stop here. Whilst I lay this at the door of the pulpit, the pew is also largely to blame. Your lives, my brethren, are trumpet sounds for the battle. I have noticed, in traveling on those fast railroad trains, that when we stop, once in a while, men come round with hammers in their hands, and sound the wheels. If these wheels give

forth a certain sound, they pass them by, for they are all right; but, if not, the quick ear of the examiner detects it; the car is condemned, switched off, and another is put in its place. The world, to-day, is sounding the lives of the soldiers of Christ; and as the physician listens to the beating of his patient's heart, so the world holds its ear close to the heart of the church, and judges by the sound that it hears whether that church is healthy, and vigorous, and active; or whether it is sickly, or dying, or dead. It is a painful truth, that too often our lives give forth an "uncertain sound." I was holding a meeting some time ago, and a lady came to me and said: "Here is a lady who wishes to ask you a question." The lady looked up, and said, "I wish to ask you, sir, to tell me the difference between the church and the world. I confess, I cannot see the difference. I visit places of amusement; I go out into the world, and I find persons who profess to be Christians doing exactly as others do. You preach that we should come into the church; I see no difference between the church and the world. Will you tell me what the distinction is?" Upon my word I felt embarrassed: I could hardly draw the line, and tell her on which side the church stood, and on which side she would find the world. A Christian man, living here in our city, will be known by those who are around him as a man who serves the Lord; and yet, when he goes off to some other city, or takes his vacation in the country, no one would know that ever he had enlisted in the army of the Lord; Christian at home, but not a Christian abroad!

There was an old gentleman in Rhode Island who

once caught a very fine salmon. He told his wife that he was going to present it to the Governor. So he put it into a nice box, and went into his house to prepare to visit the Governor's mansion. While he was in his chamber, some bad boys took the salmon out of the box, and put a toad-fish in its place. The man went along to the Governor's house, and after making a nice little speech, carefully uncovered the box, when, to his astonishment, instead of the salmon, there was a toad-fish! He was greatly vexed, went back home, laid the box on the porch; and while he went to tell his wife about it, the boys took the toad-fish out, and put the salmon back again. He said to his wife, "I thought it was a salmon, and it was a toad-fish." She said, "No, it is a salmon, and a nice one." They went out on the porch to examine it, and, sure enough, there was a fine salmon in the box! "Well," said the old man, "I never saw such a fish as that, it is a salmon at home, and a toad-fish abroad!" And that is just what is the matter with a great many of our Christian people; they are good enough at home, but too bad abroad: *Uncertain sound.* Oh, if we would have our fellow-soldiers, in all the churches, in all the denominations, prepare for the battle, let us, from the pulpit and the pew, as trumpeters for the great Leader of the armies of heaven—give forth the certain sound! Then we shall see souls saved, the cause of Christ built up, the waste places restored, and that which is now a wilderness will "blossom as the rose."

I have spoken plainly, dear friends, lest, on this occasion, I should defeat the very object I had in view, and myself give forth an "uncertain sound." Let me

say that, conscious of my own imperfections, and seeing the frailties of others, I am impressed with the thought that we should be charitable to one another, and ever encourage each other in the earnest conflict in which we are engaged. We need a cheering word and a helping hand. During the war, in one of the marches of the great armies, the commanding general issued orders that a midnight march should be made. He gave directions that not a word should be spoken by the soldiers, not even in a whisper; that they should walk carefully, lest the enemy should hear them, and become acquainted with their movements. A soldier who was on that dark and weary march told me that as he went along that night, though not permitted to speak a word, every now and then he would stretch forth his hand in the dark, and touch the man next to him—only to feel that he was there, and to assure himself that his comrades were with him. In the darkness of this life, as you and I march on, let us stand close together, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, that we may feel the touch of our comrades, and be strengthened for the burdens that we have to bear.

The conflict will not be long. To-day the sound of the battle is heard, but to-morrow we may rejoice in the shout of victory.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song.
To him that overcometh,
A crown of life shall be;
He, with the King of Glory,
Shall reign Eternally."

THE FATAL DECISION

One thing thou lackest.—*Mark* 10:21.

"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou knowest the commandments; do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and mother." And he answered and said unto him, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, *"One thing thou lackest:* go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." That was a short conversation, but there is a great deal in it. It looks right hard for a man to come so near gaining eternal life, and then to lose it. If this young fellow only lacked *one thing* of inheriting eternal life, it would seem as if he ought to have had it. But that *one* thing might be *everything.* And so it was, as we shall see. A beggar lacks only one thing to make him a rich man, and that is wealth. A dead man only lacks one thing to make him a live man, and that is breath in his body. A miss is as good as a mile, no matter how near we came to making it. May the Lord help us to look into this matter carefully and prayerfully and see what it was that this

young man lacked. And may the one thing needful be supplied if it should be found wanting in any heart that is here.

One Thing Thou Lackest

It will help us in this investigation to look at the subject negatively, for you see it is rather a singular search that we are making. We are looking for something that is lacking; hunting for a thing in this young man's life that isn't there. And yet we must find the *one thing wanting*, and secure it for ourselves if we have it not, for upon it depends our inheritance of eternal life. We can get a good view of the subject by clearing away the obstructions. There were many things that he did not lack, which though good in their places could not supply the one great need. By looking at these one by one, it will help us to find out what the trouble was.

He did not lack money. A great many people seem to think that if they have money they don't need anything more. Well, there is nothing wrong in a man having money. It is when money has the man that the trouble comes in. This young man had great possessions, and yet Jesus said to him that there was one thing he lacked. Money may buy you a husband or a wife, or a home, or an office, or a position in society, but it will not buy you a ticket to heaven. Dives was rich, but he went to hell, and couldn't carry his money with him either. There is a great struggle going on in this world for money; everybody is after money, but there is something else more important than that. It may do a good deal for us here, but it won't do us

much good hereafter. I could show you a fine farm where a man used to live. He had splendid stock, raised fine crops, made plenty of money, but cared no more for religion than one of his cattle. He would work all the week, and when Sunday came he would ride over his farm, salt his stock, right up his fences and make plans for the next week's work. One day he came in and said he had a pain. They sent for the doctor. The doctor saw that death had struck him and told him so. The old man couldn't believe it at all. "Why, doctor," he said, "that can't be. I have been working hard all my life to accumulate this property, and do you tell me that as soon as I begin to get so that I can enjoy it, I must die and leave it? No, no, doctor, it cannot be, it cannot be." But he did die, and what good did his money do him? Instead of riches being the thing to save a man and give him eternal life, it is often the thing that damns him and gives him eternal death. Jesus said when the young man went away, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Brother, if your riches are increasing, set not your heart upon them.

The young man did not lack morality. When Jesus repeated the moral law to him he said he had kept it all from his youth. Few young men could say what he said and tell the truth. I have no doubt the mothers in the neighborhood would tell their sons about this young man and advise them to try to be like him. Morality is a good thing. I admire and respect a moral man. But a danger lies here. A man may be moral and not a Christian. He can't be a Christian and not

be moral. Do not mistake morality for Christianity. This young man was moral, and it was a good thing as far as it went, but he still lacked one thing of getting eternal life. Morality of itself will not save you, my friend. Do not let it prove a snare to your feet. That young man did not lack morality, but there was something else wanting, of far more importance than mere good behavior.

Neither did he lack *a desire for religion.* He came running. It was really his wish to be prepared for the hereafter. He realized that he was mortal, believed that there was a better world than this, and he was anxious to go to it when he died. Once, when I was preaching, a young man came forward, and said, "Mr. Wharton, I want a religion that will go with me to my grave." That was what this young man wanted. He felt a deep desire in his heart to get eternal life and he went running to Jesus to find out what was necessary for him to do to be saved. Many a young person and old one, too, would like it the best in the world to be saved. There is nothing wrong in their *desire.* That is all right. If desire would save them, they would stand high on the roll of the redeemed. But desire by itself is not worth talking about. I suppose the devil desires to be saved if he would tell the truth about it. Desire was not the one thing wanting in this case.

Nor was it want of *respect for the Saviour.* He came kneeling. That was a beautiful sight. A moral young man, with a deep desire to be saved, kneeling at the feet of Jesus. Then he was so rich, too, and so respectable. He was a young ruler. No doubt the

girls all set their caps for that fine young man. He moved in the very best society. Drove fine horses, was at every party, occupied a prominent place at every public meeting and was a general favorite. He must have been very amiable and attractive, too. For, it is said, "Jesus looked upon him and loved him." What a pity that such a young man should be found lacking in anything! There are people of our acquaintance, so good, so lovely in character, so generous and noble-hearted, that it does look like a pity for them to be lost. Dear Elder Dodson, the quaint old preacher of North Carolina, and known far and wide for his peculiar but devoted ministry, was accustomed to stop at the home of a liquor-seller, whose wife was a good Christian woman. The liquor man would always give the old preacher money and ask him to put it where it would do the most good. He was a generous-hearted man, though engaged in the work of destroying the souls and bodies of men. One day when Elder Dodson was leaving, the man put some money into his hand as usual. The grand old man took the bar-keeper by the hand, and said to him, "You are a good man. I begrudge the devil your soul." He walked away, with trembling step. The liquor dealer did not take his eyes off him until he went out of sight. Then turning, he went back in the house, and said to his wife, "Did you hear what old Mr. Dodson said to me?" "No." "He said he begrudged the devil my soul. I want you to pray for me. The devil sha'n't have my soul." Well, you may know how that wife felt. God was answering her prayer of years. They had a protracted meeting and a revival right there. He was

converted, Christ took charge of his soul, he quit his liquor business and is now an humble and devoted Christian. I tell you there are plenty of fine, noble, nice people that look too good for the flames, and we begrudge the devil their souls, but he has already written their names upon his book of death. "ONE THING THOU LACKEST."

Jesus knew what was the one thing wanting in this young man's life and he brought it out with great power. Though there were many things he did not lack, and was blessed above many of his fellow-men, one thing was wanting and it was fatal. *That one thing was* OBEDIENCE. "Go sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." The young man was rich. He loved his money. That was his weak point. The Lord put him to the test and he couldn't stand it. The answer to his question has come, but it didn't come the way he expected. And that isn't all: the most important moment in that young man's life has come. He has reached the point when he must decide whether he will obey Christ or not. And let me tell you, that time comes to all of us:

> "There is a time, we know not when,
> A point we know not where,
> Which marks the destiny of men
> 'Twixt glory and despair."

Your weakness may not be riches. It may be something else. Drinking, or card-playing, or dancing, or something else. You would be willing to obey Jesus if he would let you hold on to one or two certain things

that you like. But no, he says, come right, if you come at all. Break the cables, burn the bridges, take a clean ticket or none at all. When Matthew was called he had a fine business, but it was bad; plenty of companions, but they were wicked; many pleasures, but they were sinful, and so, it is said, "He left all, rose up and followed Jesus."

But it was too much for the young man. He wanted heaven, but loved his money too well. Many others are like him in the world to-day. Religion may go, church may go, Bible may go, Christ may go, if they can only make money.

It is written, "He went away sorrowing." Ah, poor fellow! no wonder. He was going away from Jesus, away from heaven, away from every hope of happiness. Going away to unbelief and worldliness, and at last to the devil. What a pity! How it must have grieved the heart of the blessed Lord! O friend, don't you do that way.

Obey Christ in everything. Give up anything, everything for him. Don't, I pray you, do not let it be said of you that you would have been in heaven, but you lacked one thing. When the West was being settled, a young man went out there and took a little piece of land, built a cottage, and he and his wife went to work to make a living. There were no neighbors near them; only once in a while you will come to a house on the wild prairie land. One wintry day he went to mill. It was a long distance to go, but he took his bag of corn on his horse and went on. It commenced to snow soon after he started and grew worse all day. On his way back his horse could hardly get along through the

drifts. Night came on. The driving storm beat into his face, and blinded him. Still he pressed on. He soon found he would freeze if he stayed on his horse, so he left him and tried to walk. On and on he went. His poor wife was holding a candle at the window, and trying to look out into that fearful night for her brave young husband. But he did not come. All night long the storm raged, the winds howled and the snow drifted through every crevice. When the morning came she started in search of her husband, and found him about a hundred yards from the house, cold and stiff in death. Lost, *in sight of home.* So it was with the young man of whom we have been thinking to-day. One thing only he lacked. One more step and all would have been well. And yet, with all his privileges and blessings, he was lost. Lost, in sight of home, in reach of heaven.

BITTER WATERS SWEETENED

> And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; . . . And Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.—*Ex.* 15:23-25.

This event in the life of Israel is very valuable. If you will take your Bible and read the history of this chosen people carefully, you will learn many important and useful lessons. You will see how God deals with men. You will gaze into the secrets of Providence; and many things dark to you now will become as bright as day.

One of these beautiful lessons we have before us this morning. May he whose province it is to guide us into all truth, assist us in our study and then our souls shall be blessed.

The song of triumph had hardly died upon the lips of the happy people on the banks of the Red Sea, before those lips are parched with burning thirst. Three days they marched in the desert and had no water, but at last came to water which was so bitter that they could not drink it. The people murmured. This was wrong. Murmuring can never sweeten the bitter waters. Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree which he cut down and the waters

were sweetened. Here let us pause by the waters of Marah. Let us meditate in the first place upon *Life's Bitter Waters.* Second, we shall find that *Bitter Waters may be sweetened.* And finally, we may see *why we have to drink the bitter waters.*

1. Bitter Waters. Look into Marah and you see an image reflected. It is yourself, fellow-mortal; for there you must stand, and of these bitter waters you must drink ere you reach the promised land. Ah, it is a sad day when the cup of bitterness is pressed to our lips. I know not what yours may be. You can tell, for each heart knows its own sorrow.

It may be Sin. Early in life we run after this enticing fountain, but soon find it full of "the wormwood and gall." Have you not found it so? Then drink on if you will, you will come to the dregs by and by. In my boyhood I read of a nobleman in Europe who had a favorite bird, which he carried with him in all his rambles. One day, as he sat by a clear little mountain stream, he dipped his silver cup into the crystal waters, and was about to drink, when his bird flew at the cup, and overturned it. Again and again was this repeated, until in anger he cruelly struck the bird and killed it. Then turning, he saw a large dead serpent in the water just a little above him, poisoning the whole stream. But the bird had saved his life. Oh, that the holy Dove of heaven would dash the cup of sin from your lips to-day. You will find it bitter and full of deadly poison to your soul.

But it may be that your bitter cup is *Poverty.* You never have had a home you could call your own. You have heard nothing but *rent, rent,* all your days. When

you were a child, and other children were looking so nice in their new suits, you had to wear your brother's or your sister's old clothes, and patched and altered at that. You have wanted to help others in distress, but you were too poor yourself. And when appeals have been made for worthy objects, you have said, "Oh, if I had only something to give, how happy I would be." Your children have been in want sometimes, and your heart has bled when you could not supply their needs. And thus you have stood at Marah and drunk the bitter waters while the hot tears were scalding your cheeks.

Disease and death are exhaustless springs of bitterness. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." There are men and women who have had these bitter cups to their lips all their lives. Many who never walked a step, never saw this beautiful world nor the faces of their loved ones. How bitter! And what shall I say of death? Go to the homes and the hearts that are desolate, or stand in the graveyard where brightest hopes lie buried, and you will say, "Ah, Marah, thy waters have embittered the earth." But I must pass to better things.

Two aged Jews once sat amid the ruins of their city after its destruction by the Emperor Titus. "Ah, brother," said one, "our beloved Jerusalem is gone, forever gone." "Do not despair," said the other, "God hath foretold this sorrow, but said that his mercy should follow. The destruction has come, let us look for the mercy." So God hath foretold bitter waters for us in this life, but he hath also made provision that these bitter waters may be sweetened. Whatever your bitter cup may be, there is a sweet cup in the

hands of God to make it pleasant to your taste and refreshing to your soul.

2. The Bitter Waters May be Sweetened. When Moses cried unto the Lord, he showed him a tree which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. I imagine it was a tree standing on the banks of the pool, and they cut it down right into the waters and the water was made sweet, and they all drank until they were satisfied. Now where is the tree to sweeten the bitter waters for us? Get your axes and let us look around.

Here is the *Tree of Riches.* Its branches are widely extended. It lifts its towering head until it kisses the skies. Shall we cut it down? A man died in New York the other day worth eleven million dollars, and said he was miserable. This tree will not do. It will fall on the man who cuts it down and crush him to perdition.

Well, here is another: it is the *Tree of Pleasure.* But its fruits will turn to ashes on our lips. It is rotten at the heart and will bring decay and death; pass it by.

Look again. Why not take this thrifty-looking tree; its name is *Strong Drink.* Will that sweeten the bitter waters? Man has tried it. What has been the result? The waters have been turned into gall, and the bitterness increased until the soul that drinks it dies. Oh, cut it not down; if you do, let it fall the other way. Let it fall in the flames of eternal wrath.

But here is another tree. It is unlikely; it is the only one of its kind; it is an accursed tree. It grew on Calvary. Its name is The Cross. It bears the precious fruit of a crucified Redeemer. Cut it down,

let it fall into the waters, the bitter waters of life. It will sweeten all. Is sin thy bitter cup? The Cross will take its poison from your soul. Does poverty embitter life? The tree of Calvary will make it sweet. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich." Temptation may offer its bitter cup to our lips; disease and death and desolation may have swept all away; but bring us the Cross and all our sorrows shall be turned into sweets, and our song of praise shall be heard even from the deep gloom of dark Gethsemane. Oh, that this blessed tree may fall into the waters of every life, then you who have prayed, "If it be possible, O my Father, let this cup pass," will be able to say, "Not my will but thine be done."

"When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me,
Lo, it glows with peace and joy:
Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide."

3. Let us dwell very briefly upon the third point. WHY WE HAVE TO DRINK THE BITTER WATERS. Why do we have to suffer so much sometimes while on our journey home? Our Father tells us in the text, "There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and *there he proved them.*" It was not on the banks of the Red Sea, while joy unspeakable excited the breasts of his people, but at Marah, that God proved

them. It is not in prosperity, but in affliction, that he tries you and me. David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." At the bitter waters God puts us to the test and tries our faith.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

The day will come, dear friends, when looking back from eternity, we shall praise the Lord that ever we camped at Marah, and drank its bitter waters.

Israel did not tarry long at Marah, but marched on to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and the pleasant shade of the palm-trees, under which they could rest and enjoy the bounty of God.

Soon we shall move on to the heavenly land, and rest under the beautiful trees, where the fountains of everlasting life shall refresh our weary souls. While we stay here let us not murmur; the Cross is too near for any to be sad. Be of good cheer, for all is well. Only a few more days in the wilderness and we shall enter the promised land.

"Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry,
We're marching through Immanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high."

A short while ago I was conducting a meeting at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and had a great deal of sat-

isfaction in going over the battlefields and looking at the places where men fought, where patriotism reigned, and where true courage led men to the cannon's mouth for love of country and of home. A short distance down the road which leads to my old home in Culpeper, there stands a monument and upon that monument the words are written which indicate that the far famed, dearly beloved and highly honored Stonewall Jackson received his fatal wounds and fell from his horse. He lived only a few days thereafter. His men had shot him in obedience to his own order to fire upon any one who came along that road. Upon the stone is written the message of General Lee to him as he lay upon his deathbed expressing his own regret that he himself could not have taken Jackson's place in this, his fatal hour, and then on one side are the words last uttered by this great man whose wonderful military genius was hardly equaled by his devoted Christian life. "Let us pass over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

"FREEMASONRY" *

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!—*Psalm* 133: 1.

It is not my purpose to pronounce an encomium upon Freemasonry. Its history is before us, a living epistle, known and read of all men, declaring to the world that it is an organization of charity and benevolence, controlled and exercised in accordance with the Holy Word of God. I am not here in vindication of its principles or to answer frivolous objections. The Freemason never descends to a plane so low as to cater to the curiosity of idle and inquisitive minds. To do this would be like making an apology for virtue, or casting imputations upon the noblest and best of institutions of its kind. It is my purpose, however, to show to this audience why our brother, who was an earnest Christian, was also a zealous Mason; and to do this I must set before you some of the doctrines and principles of our Order.

If antiquity is an evidence of true worth, we bear the palm, for this Brotherhood antedates all other societies and benevolent organizations. In Solomon's temple our craft was born. This wise king, ere he had commenced his reign, resolved to build a temple to the Most High God. Hiram, king of Tyre, was his able ally, and eighty thousand masons and seventy thousand men of burden were gathered to execute the plans of

* This sermon was preached on a memorial occasion upon the death of a brother of the Order.

the architect. Another Hiram, who in one place is called the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and in another a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, was chosen to superintend the work; and so the magnificent building rose to completion and not a sound was heard of ax, nor hammer, nor metallic tool. From that temple the Masonic fraternity came forth, and their footsteps may be traced along the ages to the present day. But age alone is not a sufficient guarantee of goodness unsupported by intrinsic value. I shall set the door of the temple ajar therefore, that you may look into some of our doctrines and principles, that you may learn something of what we believe and what we do. We believe in man's unfitness, naturally, to answer the ends of his being. Symbolized by the rough ashlar. The rough stone is unfit for its place in the building until the sharp corners are taken off and smoothed down. So with man in his natural state. He must be smoothed down by cutting off all the asperities of his nature. The square must be applied, and we must be fitted for our place in the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Again—Man's mortality is beautifully set forth in our doctrines, by the symbol of the hour-glass. The broad level of time over which we are all sojourning to that bourne from which no traveler returns. The mournful monument, the spade, the coffin, all admonish the Mason of his end. Death terminates the journey. Death ends our labors, and seals the account for the examination of the Grand Master above. The man grows up in life, and bears his blushing honors thick

upon him; then comes a frost, a chilling frost to blast his happiness and life; we know that we are mortal.

Our order teaches too, the immortality of the soul. Jacob's ladder resting on the earth and reaching far beyond the clouds teaches through faith, hope and charity that the soul is immortal. That faith binds us to the nature of a Higher Being, and with her own hand guides us through paths of purity to the everlasting rest prepared for the people of God. Hope, "whose seraph hands convey to the soul the morning dream of life's eternal day"; whose gentle voice whispers sweet comfort in the hour of grief, and warms the cold heart with a zeal for virtue and for good; and charity, the greatest of the three, the embodiment of all, leads us from the topmost round into the realms of bliss. On the sea of life these constitute our chart, our compass and our guiding star; and tell the man who enters the sacred precincts of our Lodge that "dust thou art, to dust returnest, ne'er was spoken of the soul."

But we teach another doctrine. The resurrection of the body. True, this is a doctrine of divine revelation. But its impression is stamped so indelibly upon the Master Mason's mind that while memory holds her seat among the faculties of his soul he never can forget the sacred lesson. The earthly tabernacle laid in the dust is to rise to life again. No earthly power is adequate to the work. We may lay hold upon the body, but it falls to pieces; we may take the cold hand in ours and thus endeavor to raise the lifeless corpse, but the flesh forsakes the bones. We may bring to our aid all art and science, but none can suffice. Only the

Omnipotent God—only he who declared himself the Resurrection and the Life, can awake the quiet sleeper, and by the strong grip of the Mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah, raise the inanimate dust to life and put upon the body incorruptible habiliments of eternal life.

Again—a firm and unbroken belief in the divine authority of the Bible is distinctly set forth in the workings of our Order. Denying this, we remove one of the chief cornerstones of our great and splendid building, and the whole structure is left unguarded to the merciless and pitiless storms, soon to fall, as fall it must if you take from our altar this sacred book. Nay, we receive it as an accredited volume of divine inspiration. It meets us with its sacred lessons at every step in our progress through all the degrees. We can substitute nothing in its stead. Without the Bible, the plumb-line, the square, the line, the compass, would have no significance, but all our working tools, which operative Masonry has furnished us, would be divested of the meaning which was given them by our fathers in the Royal Art. Our processions would be hollow pageants, our charity, friendship and brotherly love a heartless profession, and all our pretensions as baseless as the fabric of a vision. We love the Bible. We have preserved it in the darkest ages of the church, when the hand of infidelity and of persecution sought its destruction. And while there remains a just and legally constituted Lodge upon the earth, there will be found a Bible upon its altar, and loving hearts and strong hands to cling to and protect it as Heaven's richest legacy to man. We believe in God. An atheist or a disbeliever in the Bible cannot be a Mason. He

must have a clear and distinct recognition of the being and perfections of God, and this is no outward profession. The All-seeing Eye means something with the Mason.

Freemasons have always been worshipers of the one true God. This was the first cornerstone on which our originals placed the foundation of Masonry. While others have gone off after idols and false gods, have bowed the knee to Baal, or prostrated themselves before Jupiter and Venus, Mars and Mercury, Isis and Osiris, the true Mason, through dark and trying ages, has kept his eye steadily fixed upon the great I AM, the great architect of the heavens and earth, the Grand Master of the Universe; but beyond a belief in God we go no further, but leave the minds of all men free and untrammeled, to follow with perfect freedom their own belief. We have no creeds, no code of doctrines; but a solid Masonic faith, out of which grew the unwritten doctrines I have briefly mentioned.

I pass now hurriedly to our practices or moral duties, which relate to our fellow-beings. With Masonry, as with men, it is not the doctrines professed, but the acts performed that constitute the true worth. I would mention first: brotherly love— Behold, how beautiful it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. We love the brotherhood. We favor no man for his wealth. We frown on no man for his poverty. We pay no partiality to learning or nobility; but we are all brothers, bound together, by a silver cord, which no earthly power can loose. We march along in solid phalanx, a living wall of love to the fulfillment of our allotted work in life. Ah! that all mankind could catch and

cultivate the sacred principle. How many aching hearts would beat with happiness alone! How many ruffled minds would calmly contemplate the happiness and peace of good-will among men! The oily tongue of slander would be stilled forever, and envy, hatred and malice would be buried in oblivion. We love our brethren; we uphold them in life and when death comes we consign them to the earth. We throw the veil of forgetfulness over their faults, and leave them with the earnest prayer that it may be well between them and their God.

There is another strong and beautiful column in our temple. It is relief or charity! "To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with them in their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the grand aim we have in view." On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections. In the year 1868, in the town of Liberty, Virginia, three little children were seen upon the street, friendless, homeless and helpless. The kind-hearted citizens gathered around them and began to make inquiry of the unfortunate little wanderers, when they were informed that they were orphans and were seeking the home of relatives, whom they believed to be in that vicinity. A gentleman noticing a soiled string which was around the little girl's neck asked if anything was attached to it. "Yes, sir," she said; "it is something my father gave me, and said I must always carry it with me." As she said this, she pulled from her bosom a little Masonic charm. It was quickly passed from hand to hand; it told its own story; made its own plea for help, and noble men gath-

ered around the children of their dead brother and gave to them all that they needed for their comfort and happiness.

We do our deeds in secret, and it is with delicacy that I speak of the relief which has been offered the helpless by this, our Ancient Order. Darkened homes, over which the shadow of death has hung its heavy folds, shedding a painful gloom over a once happy household, have often been the place for Masonic charity. Tears wiped away, sorrows soothed, the hungry fed by its noiseless hand. As the withered flowers spring up under the refreshing influence of the silently falling dew-drops when all nature is in sweet repose, so many a heart, burdened with grief, or broken by distress, has been refreshed and gladdened by the noiseless visitant, whose coming and going are alike unknown by those who receive its benefits. And when our Lodges shall have been stripped of their ornaments by the despoiler, when the gavel shall no longer be heard in the East, when the friendly grasp of a brother's hand shall be felt no more forever, two jewels will still sparkle in the diadem of Free Masonry, which will redound to its honor forever; these bright jewels are the widow's tear of joy and the orphan's prayer of gratitude.

Here let us pause and contemplate the grandeur of our Order. Faults we have, which we do not seek to hide. As a human institution, we could expect no more; but where, in all the annals of the earth, is there another order among men that can boast such age, such doctrines, and such deeds? Behold the noble structure; high above its steeple is the ever watchful All-Seeing-

Eye. Its foundations, its walls, its every part built by the rules of the Great Architect of the Universe, beautifully fashioned by the plumb, the level and the square. Within its chambers may be heard the song of praise, and the voice of prayer, while the hope of life eternal, and the resurrection to a new existence beam from the lights around the altar. Its walls a refuge from the cares and toils of life. Its roof a shelter from the pitiless storms of adversity and grief. Its treasury is open to the earnest appeal of the destitute, and relief stands ready to stay the hand of gaunt poverty and fell disease. This is the building we have made, whose cornerstones rest upon the four quarters of the globe, and whose doors are never closed against a worthy man.

In view of these things it can be no matter of wonder that our brother was a zealous Mason. He did not, however, place his lodge before his church, nor did he permit his principles as a Mason to supersede or take the place of the Christian graces that adorned his life. My brethren, Freemasonry is not sufficient of itself to save the immortal soul. There is but one name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved; that name is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world; and while I commend you for your devotion to our time-honored Order, and honor the benevolence with which you have scattered blessings along the pathway of men, I would not have you forget that One, who was the embodiment of all that is good, whose great heart ever beats in sympathy with the unfortunate, and whose strong arm is always extended for their relief, invites you to his bleeding bosom, that you may find a refuge from every care, and a safe retreat in heaven

when the work on earth is done. His will, his pleasure is, that when he shall call us from labor to refreshment, our home shall be in the Eternal City, whose maker and builder is God. To the stricken widow and the weeping children let me say, hearts full of love and sympathy are beating all around you to-day, and hands to help are ready to minister to your every want. Your loved one is in heaven. God help us all to be faithful, and when the time of departure shall come we will go to our graves not like the unwilling slave scourged to his dungeon, but like the tired child that falls sweetly asleep upon its mother's breast. Then can the brethren cast evergreens upon our coffins and thank God for the victory he has given us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ADDRESS TO YOUNG LADIES

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—*Prov.* 31:30.

In the city of Spartanburg, South Carolina, there is a great college for young ladies and the name of Converse is known throughout the Southland. One morning during the time I was holding a meeting in that city I had the privilege of speaking to about 500 of the college girls, and you may rest assured I enjoyed it very much. Whether they did or did not I was not left in doubt, for they gave me hearty applause and a good invitation to come back again.

Sometime ago I went to see one of my nieces receive her diploma. She had graduated with high honors, and with a happy heart looked out upon a rosy-tinted sky and an inviting pathway to usefulness and distinction. Sitting in my brother's parlor that same day, she turned to me, and said: "Uncle, what can I do to make the very best use of my life?" I tell you, it made me think. The question was too serious and involved too much responsibility to be answered without mature consideration. I made reply as best I could, reserving the right to continue the subject at some other time. There is absolutely no calculating the good or evil and the capabilities for action in the life of every young woman. It is my purpose to speak to you to-day as a brother, talking to his sister, and I

pray God that some word of mine may help you on the way that will make you a blessing to the world.

In the woman's chapter, the last chapter of Proverbs, the next to the last verse, it says: "Favor is deceitful, beauty is vain; but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Let us take this good proverb and follow it through, and as we shall meditate upon each sentence, I trust that he who opened the heart of Lydia to attend upon the things that Paul was saying may open your hearts to his more unworthy servant. Favor is deceitful. Ask favors when you most need them, and you will find how deceitful they are. Shakespeare made Cardinal Wolsey say, "Oh, how wretched is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors!" I might change it a little by saying, "How unhappy is the woman who hangs on the favors of any one." Every young woman is to be congratulated that the time has passed when she must either marry (and often not to her taste) or depend for a living upon the favors of a married brother or sister or some one else. She can now step out into the world and demand her living, which is her just due. All avenues to success are open to her, and her faculties are the implements of her toil. Side by side with her brother, now she may earn her own support and depend upon the favors of none. One of the most inspiring scenes in these stirring times is to see a brave girl working for her living and helping to care for an invalid father, the little brothers and sisters or a widowed mother. Verily, she has her reward. Even though you may have a rich father, or be heir to a fortune, get ready to take care of yourself, and ask no favors, should necessity be laid upon you.

Favor is deceitful. Beauty is vain. You may be thankful if you have a pretty face, but beware lest it prove your worst enemy. There is a great temptation for a pretty girl to think that her face will carry her through, and she therefore neglects the higher and nobler qualities and accomplishments, which are the power and glory of her sex. She may do very well for a "summer girl" at a watering place, to be petted and caressed for a season, and laid aside when her beauty no longer attracts. There is one good thing about ugliness—it lasts.

"Beauty is a fading leaf,
Ugly holds its own;
Beauty is but skin-deep,
Ugly is to the bone."

My young friends, if you are ugly, be of good comfort; it will stay by you. But your true beauty of mind and soul will shine through all obstacles like the X-rays, and photograph your true self upon the heart of an admiring world. Your good looks will be of a certain value, but it is not how you look, so much as how you act, that makes its impression.

"We live in deed, not words—
In facts, not in the figures on a dial;
We should count time by heart-throbs.
He lives most who feels most—
Thinks the noblest, acts the best."

Now take the third thought of our proverb. "But the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." She relies upon neither favor nor beauty, but on God.

Her trust is in him, and there are certain things she will do in the fear of the Lord, which will honor him and bless her own life. Let us see. The woman who reverences God as her Father and lives in that filial fear which ever characterizes the true-hearted child will strive to do his will and follow where he leads.

She will be careful of her health. She looks upon her body as the casket that holds the immortal jewel, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and believes it is her duty to preserve it in health and strength. It is a sin the way some women abuse and destroy their bodies. They turn night into day, expose themselves to all kinds of weather, without suitable dress, and are either old or dead at fifty. A bright and happy old age is not possible to a girl who determines to keep up with the social procession of the departing century.

She will look after her mind, also, and see that it is not fed with the paltry trash that is raked from the tables of the average book-seller or peddled like his painted candies by the newsboy. Mothers are very particular what their daughters select for the adornment of their bodies, and the richest productions of all countries must pay tribute to her caprices. But when it comes to the mind, a ten-cent novel or family story paper will fill the bill. Woman, if you would show your gratitude to him who made you, and be an everlasting blessing to those who love you best, be careful of your associates. Whether they be books or beaux. Shun the young man who chews cloves or coffee, and who can only discuss the latest football game, the newest fad, or the most outrageous display of abomination in the variety show. Suspect any man who dares take a liberty

with you. He is not to be trusted out of the sight of your father. The first step allowed, the next will not ask permission, and the verge of the precipice, yes, and the bottom, is reached ere you have had time to think, and then it is too late. Select your associates with care.

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm
With entertainment of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade."

The young fellow who sits up and talks about the theater, the card party and the ball, who ridicules religion, and laughs at the sober efforts of men and women to benefit the world, whose brains are in his feet, and whose head is an empty shell, is no companion for you. The sooner you are rid of such microbes the better, for they only breed disease and sin and death. You might seek to win them from the evil, but even then you would have a long and arduous task, and if you succeeded it is hardly worth the effort. Like the disciples, you would have toiled all night and taken—*"nothing."* You would be better occupied in other ways. Use your influence for good. It will tell. You have no time to be wasting your energies on the frivolous entertainments of this present world. There is higher joy and greater usefulness along the line of duty. Think of it: Lonely hearts need comfort, the sick languish for a smile from your sweet face, or the fragrance of a rose from your kind hand. The hungry may be fed. Yonder needy child, without mother, father or friend, could be made to sing for

joy under the sound of a loving word from you. The wanderer must be brought back; the lost saved—yes, and the dead raised up again, for there are many, and among them your sisters, from whose lives the light has fled, and in whose hearts the last hope has died. There is life and hope and joy for them in Christ. Let us bear to them the word of salvation from our blessed Lord.

"The woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Her own conscience will praise her. It is a great thing to have an approving conscience. Only a short while ago a young lady, who moves in good society, who was not suspected of doing the slightest wrong, came to me in a city where I was holding meetings, and said she was living in sin with a young man and was completely his victim. She was utterly miserable, and seemed willing to die if she might only be at peace. I told her she was not alone in her sorrow, but there was only one way out. She must forsake her sin and give herself entirely into the hands of her Saviour, and that if she did this she must come out and make confession of her Saviour that night. Although she had never made a profession of faith, she shrank from this, because she felt that every one would know she was a sinner. I was much pleased to find her among the number that came that night. There was a calm upon her face which showed the peace that was in her heart. Her conscience was praising her for the step she had taken. Our meetings closed that night. I have not seen her since. May God watch over and keep his injured child.

Nor is this all. The woman that fears the Lord will

have praise from her loved ones at home. She will be praised by those whom she has blessed and helped, and, best of all, she will have the "Well done" from the lips of Jesus. Live for two worlds, my young sisters, and when at last you stand before the King you will hear what Mary heard when she anointed the head of her Lord: "She hath done what she could."

You are building for God and eternity. Build well. When Augustus Cæsar saw a great building going up in Rome, he sent for the architect, and said to him: "You cheer my heart, for you build as if Rome would be eternal." Let your foundation be Jesus Christ, the material your good deeds, cemented together by love, and let the beauty of a pure, sweet life be the glory and splendor of your work. Build high. One lovely May morning a lady sat at her window sewing. She noticed a little bird making a nest in a rose bush near by. "Ah," she said, "my pretty creature, you are building too low—building too low." It was not long until there were four little eggs in the nest, then four "wee birdies," and the happy family were in the full enjoyment of their earthly heaven. Again the lady sat at the window sewing. Suddenly she heard the shrieks and cries of the distracted little mother, as she wildly fluttered over her desolate home. A serpent had crawled up to the nest and was helping himself to the baby birds. The poor mother, in her frantic efforts to save her children, was caught and devoured, too, and the forsaken house stood there like a monument to the folly of the pretty little builder. She had built too low. The woman who lives only for the pleasures of life and for what this world can give, builds far beneath the

plan of him who drew the outline of her life. She places herself and all that she has and is within reach of the destroyer. Give your life to God, and then put the heaven of such a life into those around you. The world will praise you here, and heaven will praise you hereafter. Remember the proverb, "Favor is deceitful, beauty is vain: but the woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised."

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Jehovah-jireh.—*Gen.* 22 : 14.

It was an occasion never to be forgotten in the household of Abraham when he was called upon to sacrifice his beloved son as an offering to God. And the words which he uttered in his gratitude became a proverb in his family, and among the Jews, his people, and have been handed down to us, a familiar phrase, which we often find suspended on the walls in our homes, "The Lord will provide!" Blessed words of comfort and encouragement to the Christian soul. The poor widowed mother as she looks upon her shivering, hungry children, breathes a sigh of relief as these words are whispered in her ear by the same ministering angel. "The Lord will provide." The tempest-tossed mariner in life's great voyage when all is dark, and no star beams in heaven above him to direct his course, feels his turbulent bosom sweetly solaced by the thought that a higher power makes provision for him, and can still the waves at pleasure, and guide him safely into port. The poor pilgrim of earth comforted by this sweet promise, closes his eyes, even in death, with full assurance that all things work together for his good.

Ah, friend, say what you will of the comforts and consolations of philosophy, but give me ever amid the trials and dangers of this life the full assurance that the Lord will provide, and I ask no more. But for whom does he provide in the sense of the text? Cer-

tainly not for the unbeliever, not for the ungodly, not for the unfaithful; no, to them Jehovah-jireh is an empty sound. He makes his gracious promise only for the faithful. It is time for those of us, who are continually saying, "We trust in providence," "Providence takes care of us," and all that, to understand that God's favorable providence is only vouchsafed to them who have faith in him. Faith is the grand prerequisite. *Faith,* not counterfeit, not pretended, not hypocritical, but *true, real,* living Faith. If we have this, then whatever may befall us in this world the emphatic assurance is ours, that "the Lord will provide." Abraham had this faith, and he could with the best assurance utter these words. It is my desire at this time to show you this faith of Abraham as an example for us to follow, and to show further that God rewards true faith. There are many of us here who profess to have *faith,* who have been baptized on a profession of our faith. Now I want to take the faith of Abraham and analyze it, look at it in all its parts, and compare ours with it. I fear with some of us it will be like comparing the pale light of the glowworm to the sun at midday, but we must make the comparison. Upon faith our salvation depends; without faith it is impossible to please God. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." Now then let us look at the faith of Abraham and as we proceed we will make the comparison: May God help us to be profited thereby.

But before we proceed to the investigation, there is one thing that I desire to notice, and that is that *God tries faith.* He tried Abraham. He knew that Abraham would come out triumphant, but he tried him

for his own good, and for the good of all the world, and by his help the trial of Abraham's faith may do us good here to-night, by showing us a brilliant and beautiful living example, and causing us to do all in our power to emulate that example. And so he tries our faith, so he *has tried us,* and I trust we have been made better men and women by it and by our experience in the trial we have been enabled to benefit our fellow-men. Now let us see what kind of faith this was which was able to stand the trial and reap the reward, saying, "The Lord will provide."

It was a ready faith. God called him, "Abraham!" he answered, "Here am I," ready. Turn back a few chapters and notice the call of Adam—he hid himself. I said we would make the application as we proceed. Now you who profess faith in God, if he should call you to-night, would you be ready, could you answer back responsive to his call, Here am I? Have you this faith? Dr. Kidd, a Scotch minister, stepping into one of his member's shops said, "Did you expect me?" "No." "What if it had been death?" Oh, look into your heart, and hear the words of the Saviour, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." A few years ago in a neighboring state we were all resting quietly in our homes, when suddenly the alarm of fire swept through our little town. We arose to witness its destructive power in our midst. It came without warning. Oh, how soon we know not, will the flames of the final conflagration burst upon the world, or the fires of perdition hold in their terrible embrace some soul here. Let us be ready when the call shall come.

It was a sacrificing faith. See what he was called upon to do. Not to give up some of his cattle, his property, his money, but his son. The only child of the devoted old couple must be given up, the well-loved son. and not only this, but he himself must take his life. It seems to me if God had come, and said to Abraham, "I gave you Isaac, and now must take him away," it would have been hard for the aged father to bear. The sacrifice would have been truly great, but this was not enough. Not only must this treasure of his heart be given up, but he must sacrifice every feeling of a father's heart, deaden every sensibility, stifle every emotion of love, and must himself take the life of his beautiful and devoted boy, the only child that had blessed the union of that aged couple. How often, with tenderness and love, had they looked on his fair face, and thanked God for this heaven-sent joy to brighten and gladden the evening of their lives. But now they must give him up, and that night, while Isaac sleeps upon his couch, the sad old patriarch tells the dreadful news to his faithful wife, and all through the night their hearts bleed over the dreadful event, which awaits them on the morrow. Isaac, their son, the light of their home, the joy of their hearts, must be taken away. Oh, what a sacrifice! What a faith! What a sacrificing faith! Have you any faith like that? Perhaps you have been called upon to give up a child, a parent, a brother or sister, and you have tried to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good," but suppose you had been called upon to take the life of that child, that parent, could you have made that sacrifice? But to come a little closer home to our

experience. Have we a sufficient amount of that sacrificing faith to deny ourselves, and to give the fruits of that denial to God? In other words, have we faith enough to give our time, our talents, our money, all that we are, and have, to the cause of Jesus? If he were to come to us and say, as he did to a certain young man, "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor," would we do it? I fear it would be said of us as of the young man, "He went away sorrowful." Friends, the right kind of faith is a sacrificing faith, like that of Abraham's. A faith ready to give up, if need be, all that we are, and all that we have, to God.

It was a firm, unwavering faith. There is a kind of faith, so called, which might be very well termed fair-weather faith. As long as the sun shines, and all is prosperous we trust in God, and feel ourselves greatly favored. But let storms of trouble, or the night of affliction, or the hour of danger come, we forget all about faith at the very time we need it most, and trust in our own weak arms for protection and preservation. This was not the faith which Abraham had. Now, he had trusted God in the past, and all things had worked for good, and though the way seemed dark now, his faith did not falter. True, God had told him that from Isaac should spring up a generation of people, and how could this be if Isaac must die. This was the voice of reason, but faith, higher and stronger than human reason, stood firm and inexorable, in the face of what seemed to be the most stupendous difficulties. Ah, my brethren, could your faith stand this trial, or is it like the man's whose friend asked him to pray that it might cease to rain? "I will pray," said he, "but as long as

the wind remains in the east it will rain forever." True faith would have prayed to the God of winds. True faith rises above all difficulties. I like the faith of the colored man and the illustration he gave of it. "You see dat stone wall? Well, if de Lord was to say to me, 'Mose, I want you to jump through dat stone wall,' I would jump at it, specting de Lord to have a hole in it time my head got dar, dat's faith." Yes, that is faith. True faith falters not in the face of opposition. True was the faith of Abraham, firm and unwavering when all things seemed to be against him.

Finally, it was an *obedient* faith, and that is the kind of faith to have after all. We hear no complaint, no mournful regrets, but read that early in the morning he started to the place, where the solemn duty must be performed. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac, his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." Let us follow them up that mountain. Seldom indeed is the mournful silence broken. The old man's heart is sad, but his step is steady and unfaltering. Isaac breaks the silence: "My father, behold the fire, and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" He answers in full confidence, "God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering, my son," as much as to say, that does not concern me, 'tis mine to obey. He makes the altar, binds his son, places him on the funeral pile, uplifts the knife. But hark! a voice is heard, "Abraham!" "Here am I." Look upon the picture! A monument of obedient faith. A devoted father with the glittering instrument of death in his hand, about to plunge it into

the heart of his beloved son. Where do you find such faith in these latter days? Is it here in any heart in this house? With some of us it is a great sacrifice, and hard work to try to save a soul or even come to prayer meeting on a rainy evening, or teach a class in Sunday school. Oh, let us hang our heads in shame, when we look into this mirror of faith, and behold what miserable deformities, what disobedient, faithless, unprofitable servants we all are without exception.

But the faith of Abraham had its reward, a victim was provided for the sacrifice, Isaac was restored to him, and then his glad heart sang the sweet words, "The Lord will provide." The place which witnessed such a matchless faith ever bore the name JEHOVAH-JIREH, a testimony to faith, and the providence of God. Yes, my friends, the providence of God is ever the reward of faith. If you have not faith, or if your faith is weak, go at once and ask him to help you. Without it we are lost, with it we can defy all powers, and principalities, thrones and dominions, dangers and difficulties, men and devils. Then may you hand in your homes, and write upon your hearts, and treasure in your minds the comforting words, "The Lord will provide." If you are poor and struggle for your daily bread, and have a family, and fear that the time may come when you will have to leave them to suffer, remember, if you have faith, "The Lord will provide." "I have been young," says David, "and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." If you are beset with difficulties, and temptations, and trials, and *have faith,* you have nothing to fear, nay though death itself should come. Your

faith can meet any demand, for God's providence ever cares for the faithful, and extends beyond the grave. I trust we have learned a lesson which we shall not forget: that the faith which many people have is hardly worth having, and that the best of us are far from having such faith as the grand old patriarch. What then? That there is a great room for improvement, and by the help of God all of us ought to do better, and improve the swiftly passing moments, which are bearing us with irresistible power to the grave. Soon life's brief day will end. We shall need true, living faith, to build the bridge across the sea of death, and land us safely on the other shore. Do not despise your faith because it is weak, nor be discouraged if it sometimes falters. Jesus, who knows full well how frail we are, says if our faith be as the grain of mustard seed, it shall do great things. The little that we have is precious to him and should be dear to us.

When I was pastor in Luray, Va., I had a most devoted member who was a blacksmith. He was indeed a faithful witness for his Lord and Master, and when his customers would come and he would be shoeing their horses or doing other kinds of work, he would put in a word for his Saviour. It was a strange providence indeed, which permitted him to fall a victim of tuberculosis while yet in the strength of his manhood. The progress of the disease was rapid and when he lay upon his deathbed, the emaciated wreck of his former self, I said to him one day, "My brother, your life has been true and faithful. You have used your talents to the very best of your ability and soon you will come to your reward." His reply was made slowly and

simply with hardly enough strength to form and express his words: "I have no fear of the future, dear pastor, all is well with me, and I am not uneasy." He reminded me of the death of an engineer whom I knew, and in his last moment when another trainman leaned over him and said, "John, is it all right with you?" he lifted his trembling hand and with a smile playing over his face, he said, "The signals are all right and the way clear ahead. I shall soon enter the Grand Union Station and be at home." So it was with my dying friend and brother. "I have no fear of the future, but I shall leave a widow and six little children, not one of whom is able to help the mother. I fear for them." I replied, "Yes, but do you not recall how Jesus said, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice, and ye are of more value than many sparrows.' So he who cares for the little sparrows will not forget your dear wife and the little children." Not long after he went away the little family became scattered, but I kept in sight of them all, and even when I left Luray and came to Baltimore I kept them in mind. I watched the family grow, the boys and the girls. They received a good education. The mother was well cared for. They have grown up, married well, and reared families and not one of them has ever wanted, no, not for one moment. Build your monument of gratitude and stamp upon it Jehovah-jireh, for the Lord will provide for his own even unto the end.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT IT*

If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?—*Jer.* 12:5.

The footman Affliction. Many of us can look back to the days of our childhood when the rose had no thorn and the serpent had no sting. When the path was cool and smooth to our bare feet and the rosy-tinted future beckoned us on to a gleeful happy life. We did not know what affliction was but happiness blessed our childhood day by day.

I can remember in the old farmhouse at the evening time sitting before a great roaring open fire, father in one corner, mother in the other and eight children from the oldest at father's side down to the youngest, myself, at my mother's side, sitting in the little arm chair which had come all the way down from the oldest one of the children. They would talk of things that concerned us and that we could understand. It would not be long till bedtime for the youngest of us, and so they said sweet and simple words and sometimes not infrequently they spoke of heaven. I can remember that without understanding how or why it was when they began to talk of heaven a feeling of depression crept over me which I could not explain. In later years as I looked back upon it I can sympathize with

* This sermon was preached in Durham, N. C., Sunday morning, April 3, 1927, the closing day of a great revival in the First Baptist Church, Dr. C. C. Coleman, pastor.

the young Scotch girl whose lover sought to woo her away from her old father and mother. You remember the words,

"I fear me so they are failing both.
For when I sit apart they talk of heaven so earnestly,
It well nigh breaks my heart
So, laddie, do not urge me more,
It surely will not be.
I cannot leave the old folks now,
We'd better bide a wee."

One night as they talked of heaven, mother, placing her hand upon my head and turning my face up to hers as I sat in my little chair at her side smiling, said to me, "And mother wants her baby to go to heaven too." I replied, much to her surprise, "Mother, please don't send me to heaven. I don't want to go to heaven." "What," she said, "my sweet boy doesn't want to go to heaven?" I said, "No, mother. You are here and father is here and brothers and sisters all here. Please don't send me away to heaven." My child heart felt that heaven was right there then, but how is it now. Father gone, mother gone, brothers and sisters all gone; I only am left. Heaven does not seem so far away now as it did at that happy hour. Afflictions came and the first one that it took out of my home was the one we least could spare, our precious mother. And so in the days of my childhood I began to run with the footman Affliction, and sometimes it has wearied me beyond my power to express. So it has been with you. You have run with afflictions and they have wearied you.

Then there is the footman, Temptation. There are temptations that we have outrun. No longer do they annoy us, but others come in and take their places. Take, if you please, the temptation to drink. See the lone, ragged wayfarer. We call him tramp. Look upon him. He is some mother's child. He has seen better days. Why is he so battered and bedraggled now? He has been running with the footman Temptation and it has almost run him to death. And what is true of that one is true of them all. When one is not at your side another is, until the end of your journey.

Then there are the footmen of Disappointment. I can hardly conceive of a more dreadful blow upon the human heart than for us to have an ambition to secure a certain prize, and after toiling and sacrificing and putting every inch of our will and mental power on the altar of our desire, just as we reach forth our hand to grasp the prize, it slips away and is gone forever. You could not find more striking examples of this than the young men whose ambition it has been to fly across the great Atlantic Ocean and arouse the admiration of a gazing and gasping world, and suddenly they drop out. We look for them for days, and then turn away sadly to say, "They are lost." What must have been the feeling and the thoughts of these young fellows in the last hour of their consciousness, before the soul took its everlasting flight. The footman Disappointment. I knew a home years ago in whose family circle there was a beautiful young girl. She fell in love with a fine young man of the neighborhood and they pledged each other their eternal devotion and loyalty. The young man went away to one of the great colleges.

He gave promise of great success and accomplishment in this world's battle for precedent and victory. She stayed in her home thinking of the days when he would return to her, seeking to improve her own talents and ability that she might stand proudly at his side and go with him to the highest points of distinction in all the heights and high places of life. Not more than a year elapsed before he returned to see her in the summer vacation. She repelled the thought that crept upon her now and then that he was not as devoted and affectionate and attentive as he had been. She would not allow even the thought of suspicion to mar the happiness of her soul, or weaken the high opinion she entertained of her lover, and love's tender feeling. She could not get away from the recurring thought that there was coldness in his attentions which she had never known before. During the next session his letters were not so long as they were, nor did they come so frequently; and there was a lack of that warmth and fervor that once characterized them. Still she would not notice it, persuading herself it was only her admission. But, by and by, the fatal message came. He had seen another and upon her had conferred his love, seeking of this one to release him from her engagement. With the proud spirit of a noble and devoted girl she at once wrote releasing him. But the fatal blow had fallen upon her young heart. It was not long until it was discovered by those who knew her best in her own home, that she was losing interest in everything about her. The roses faded out of her cheeks. The quick springing step of this young fawn had now become the staggering sickness of an

invalid. She went to her bed; the doctors came and all said there was nothing at all in the way of disease that showed any symptom whatever. Her father one day said to her, "Daughter, you must not die. There is no need for you to die. You have no sickness. Arouse yourself, my child." Her reply was, "Dear father. I don't wish to live except for you and the others here at home. Life has lost its interest with me. I have no hold upon it now, though a little while ago the world was full of beauty as my heart was filled with joy." She soon fell asleep and they laid her away in her little grave. Let us mark upon the headstone, she ran with the footman Disappointment and he wearied her to death.

What is true of one of us is true of all. I need not pursue this branch of my subject further. You understand as well as I that all of us are running with the footmen and they are wearying us. Let this text come home with tremendous power to every heart, "If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" In other words, if the things of time, cares, afflictions, temptations, disappointments of this life are wearing us out, what shall we do with the realities of eternity?

It is not a comforting thought that bad as it is here it might be worse in the world to come. If by shutting our eyes to a painful truth we could destroy it, I would not ask you to look further into the situation that is before our minds to-day. If turning our backs upon solemn and disagreeable facts would change them, far be it from me to lift the curtain and ask you to take a look at the realities of eternity. The prudent man

foreseeth the evil and hideth himself. Let us inquire, if you please, what is meant by these horses. Time has its realities. Of that we are perfectly well aware. But as certainly as this is true of time it is also true of eternity. If you will turn to the sixth chapter of Revelation you will find this truth set forth in an illustration which it is perfectly easy to receive. "I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, saying, come and see. And I saw and beheld a White Horse and he that sat on him had a bow and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering and to conquer." Who is that rider on the White Horse? It is Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Son of God, who has come into this world and offered himself a sacrifice for any and every one who would receive him as their Leader and Master. But, my friends, if we reject this great choice of accepting him here on this earth as our Saviour, we must meet him as our Conqueror, the Rider of the White Horse. We may refuse to obey him here and laugh at his religion and make fun of his followers. But we shall have to bow to his authority when he rides forth conquering and to conquer in that great day which is to come.

The Emperor Julian of Rome organized a great army to fight against Jesus. He would go out and shoot into the air as he led his battalions to battle, and when asked whom he was shooting at he would answer, "I am shooting at the Nazarene. They call him Jesus." One day among the prisoners which were captured the Emperor Julian said to one of them, "You are a follower of that Nazarene carpenter, are

you?" And the reply came, "Yes, I am and am proud to say it." The Emperor laughed and said, "Well, what is he doing to-day? He is not accomplishing much on this battlefield. What is your carpenter doing to-day?" The Christian replied, "I think he is making a coffin." The next day the Emperor fell fatally wounded upon the battlefield and crying out as he fell, "Thou hast conquered, O thou Galilean." And the same will be true of every unbeliever and rejecter of our Friend and our Redeemer. "Him hath God highly exalted and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father."

And now there comes another horse. He is red and power was given him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth. The night before Jesus was crucified, he was sitting and talking with his disciples and said many gracious things to them, which they no doubt remembered with joy all the days of their lives. "I go to prepare a place for you," he said, "but I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, but it is the peace that I give to you." The world does give a certain sort of peace, but it is the peace that comes from indifference or unbelief, and is neither satisfying nor lasting. The unhappy soul loves himself into a guilty state of insecurity by resting in the thought that some day he will attend to all of these matters and

prepare himself for his departure from earth. He may have some peace in this mistaken idea, but it will leave him when he most needs it. Travelers were once crossing the great mountains in Switzerland and when they reached the top with their guide they were impressed with the great calm of the silence which could almost be felt. One said to the guide, "This is fine, let us rest here, it is so quiet, so peaceful, so sweet and pleasant." "No," replied the guide in an excited manner, "we must get down from here at once. Arise. Follow me. Make haste. Your life is at stake!" And without further explanation they followed him rapidly down the side of the mountain. Nor had they gone far before they heard the roaring of a rushing mighty wind like the sound of many waters. Suddenly it grew dark. He hastened to lead them under the ledge of a great rock. Then pausing, half breathless as they stood there secure from danger, he said, "That calm that you felt was the calm that always precedes these awful mountain storms. Had we remained on the top we should have been swept from our feet and instantly crushed against the great rocks, but now we are safe." This is an illustration of the peace which this world gives. You may feel very calm and quiet and self-assured. You may put away from you the thought and the preparation of a hereafter. You may flatter yourself that you are as good as any one else and risk all chances. But what will you do when the rider of the red horse takes away that peace and leaves you desolate in the sinking sands of unbelief where there is no hope?

Two unbelievers once agreed that when death came whichever was stricken would send for the other and show him how a man could die without the help of Jesus Christ. It came to pass that one of them was taken suddenly ill. The doctors told him he had but a short time to live. He sent at once for his friend and when the friend came in he found him desperately alarmed, very nervous, highly excited, rolling his eyes around in desperation, feeling out with his hands for any kind of rescue from his wretched condition. His friend walked in, grasped him by the hand and said, "Jim, I have come to see you die. Remember our promise. Hold on now, hold on, as you said you would do." Looking up, the dying man said, "Hold on! Hold on! How can I hold on when I have nothing to hold to?" Peace had left his unbelieving soul and there was nothing upon which he could rely. It is only the peace which Jesus gives that sustains us in that last hour which men call death.

But look again. Here comes another rider dashing down upon us. He rides the Black Horse and holds in his hands a pair of balances to weigh men. God is going to bring us to the test. He will see what sort of stuff we are made of. You may fool yourself and deceive others and mislead those who are nearest and dearest to you, but we shall pass for our true worth when we are placed in the scales of God's even-handed Justice:

"In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself buys out the law.
But 'tis not so above. There is no shuffling there.

There the indictment stands in its true nature;
And we ourselves compelled
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence."

The great question on that day to which all of us are going will not be how much money did you have, but what did you do with it? Not how high you flew in society but how humbly did you walk in life? Not *who* you are, but *what* are you? This weighing business is a serious thing. Good intentions, and forms and ceremonies, great names, large fortunes will not be counted at all. We should all be glad to let the black horse and his rider pass on; but no, we must meet him. He comes along down the very road we are traveling and there is no way by which we may avoid him. We must be weighed. God grant that it may not be said of us as was said of the wicked King, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

The fourth horse comes into view and John writes, "And I looked and behold a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death and Hell followed with him." While I have been speaking of the other horses, perhaps some of you have been saying, "Oh, that's only the imagination of the preacher; he is only dreaming." Am I dreaming now? Ah, no, your graveyards, the tombstones, the suits that you wear of solemn black, your desolated homes, your broken hearts tell you, and me, too, that these things are so. The rider of the pale horse has galloped through our houses more than once and has knocked us down and ridden over us. When we arose bewildered and terrified, a loved

one was gone. And we must meet him, too. Some of these nights you will hear the sound of a horse's feet approaching. No one else in the room will hear it but you. The ghastly monster that sits upon the back of that pale horse will say, "Come, go with me." "But," you will say, "I am not ready." "Come, I have no time to stay," says death. "It is always harvest time with me and the grain must be gathered. Ready or not ready, come along." And hell follows with him. Hell brings up the rear of this terrible company of horses, and yet we must meet them, one and all.

"If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" We just can't do it. We are worn out now with the trials and temptations and toils of life, and we cannot stand anything more. But we *must*. Look! they come charging down the sky. White Horse and Red Horse, Black Horse and Pale Horse, and Hell at their heels. Oh, what can we do? Is there no help, no refuge, no protection? God help us, here they come! Hark! a voice is speaking to me. I see one, meek and lowly and lovely at my side; he says, "I am Lord of all, I will save you from the horses' heels. Trust me, I am Jesus. I am the Conqueror, and the White Horse shall bear you home. I am the Prince of Peace, and the Red Horse cannot take me from you. I will stand with you in the balances, and my righteousness shall be counted for you. Yea, though the Pale Horse come, I am the Resurrection and the Life, and the Keys of Death and Hell are in my hands." Blessed Saviour! Thou art our Help, our Refuge. We do trust thee and thee alone and will not be afraid,

though earth and heaven tremble under the feet of whole armies of horses. Yes, friends, Jesus gives us strength to run with the footmen. He cheers us at every step and his loving arms are ever around us. And when the time comes to meet the horses, he will take us, his poor weary disciples, in his arms and carry us safely through every danger.

In speaking of the footman Affliction a while ago, you remember that the first one who was taken from our happy family group was our Mother. She had been ill but a few days and one morning our old colored cook called to me and said, "Honey, when you runs and hollers, go down about the barn or the blacksmith's shop or down in the apple-orchard, your mother hears you and she's mighty sick." I obeyed her request and yet I could not escape the thought that my dear mother was sick. I crept into the house and walking up to her bedside took her hand in mine and kissed it and asked her if she was sick. I had missed her for several days and knew that she was confined to her bed, but did not realize what it all meant. She lovingly caressed me and told me she was not sick much, to run on and play and she would soon be well. Days passed by and on one morning when I wanted to see her again they sent me away. Later in the day I saw the old family physician and my father and a stranger talk together under the locust tree down in the back yard. I ran to Aunt Edie, the cook, and inquired of her who the stranger was. She replied, "Dat's another doctor, honey. Your mother is mighty sick." Several nights afterward I was aroused from a deep sleep, and you know a hearty, healthy boy is hard to wake

when in the midst of a good night's sleep. The one who woke me was a cousin of ours, a young lady who had come to help nurse mother. After much difficulty she got to my attention that mother was sick and I must see her. Half awake and half asleep I walked along into mother's room and the scene before my sleepy eyes is vividly present with me now. Seven children older than myself were around the bed. Father was kneeling at the head, his face buried in the bed-clothing. Mother lay quietly sleeping, it seemed to me, her right hand extended and her left hand resting over her heart. Her eyes were closed. My cousin led me up to the bedside. I was surprised by an outburst of grief on the part of those round about the bed. They tried to tell me to say good-by to mother. Then I awoke fully and said, "Why, mother is not going away; she is not going to leave!" And then they added, "Mother is dying, kiss her and tell her good-by." Leaning over by their assistance I heard them say as I pressed my lips to hers, "Mother, this is your baby boy come to tell you good-by." Although more than three score years have passed since then I can to-day feel the pressure of those dear lips on mine as I felt them that night. Then some one said, "Listen, she is saying something to you." I put my ear close down to her mouth and these were the last words I ever heard my mother speak, "Meet me in heaven." My friends, although all the world should stand up and deny God and refuse to accept my Saviour, the beautiful life and triumphant death of my dear mother is sufficient evidence to me that she has gone home to

be with her Saviour, and by his help and his alone I hope to meet her there.

The footmen may run at my side. They may weary me, but in all these things I have his daily help and I can truly say that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and when at last the rider of the pale horse shall beckon me to follow him I shall go, nothing doubting, for Jesus has promised that he will take me safely through life and present me in the presence of the Father at the last great day as his own, saved by his grace, purchased by his precious blood; at home with him forever.

GOD IS LOVE

God is love.—*I John* 4: 16.

If you were on your way to call upon a man concerning a very important matter and some one should say to you, "The man you seek is cruel and unkind, he is hard-hearted and cross in his manner; if he can possibly avoid it he will not grant you a favor or comply with any request you make," you would feel a great reluctance in approaching a man like that; but if, on the other hand, you should be informed that the man you are visiting is courteous and gentlemanly, warm-hearted and generous, beneficial and able, ever ready to do anything in his power to assist any one in distress, to comfort those who are in trouble and to cheer and bless any and all about him, you would hurry to meet a man like that. Just so, my friends, when we speak and think of God. Some have called him a tyrant, a cruel King, sitting upon his throne with an uplifted sword edged with a thousand curses, ready to cut down the wicked at any moment. We are all afraid of a God like that and tremble at the thought of approaching such a King upon his throne. But, that is not the God of the Bible. It is not our God. When I read that God is Love, and that as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities us, then, indeed, I feel like going to him and seeking his aid in every time of need. True it is, indeed, that God is our Refuge and Strength, an ever-present help in trouble. If we could

get that truth—GOD IS LOVE—down into our hearts, the whole world would turn to him at once.

There is a church in Chicago, and over the pulpit these words are arranged in gas jets: "God is Love." When the gas is lighted these three words blaze and burn to the joy of the whole congregation. One night a poor fellow went walking down the streets of Chicago, and looking in at the open door, these words burning by the pulpit caught his eye, "God is Love." "Yes," said the poor fellow, "I know 'God is Love' to those rich people who travel along these streets in their fine carriages; I know he is love to those who live in their great houses around here; but God is not love to a poor wretch like me." He went shuffling along down the street, and yet the words were in his heart. He walked on, and presently stopped at the corner of the street, repeating to himself, "'God is Love.' Let me go back and take another look at those words; they do sound so pleasant to me." He stopped again in front of the church door, looking in, and reading over and over again the words. He ventured in, and taking a seat near the door, heard the closing words of the preacher's sermon; and in those words he heard that "Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh"; that "he came to seek and to save that which was lost"; that "God so loved the world" that he gave him to die for poor sinners. Soon the congregation was dismissed, and all went away except the tramp. The preacher came along, down the aisle, and stopped and asked the man what he could do for him, supposing that he was only there to ask for money to buy something to drink. The poor man pointed to the words above the pulpit,

and said to him, "Do those words mean me?" The preacher replied, "We can find out, for God is here, and if you will kneel down here beside me, I will ask him." A few words of earnest prayer were offered, and as the preacher talked with God, he heard a sob break forth from the lips of the distressed and wayward man at his side. When they arose from their knees, he said to the preacher, "I don't know how it is, but I feel like 'God is Love' for me, too," and the tears ran down his cheeks. He went on his way home that night, and told his wife, who sat in poverty and sorrow in her humble home, that he had found God, and that "God is Love." That truth had gone into his heart, and had made a new man of him; had taken him into a new life; had lifted him up into a world of usefulness and joy which he had not known before; and there are some of us who can endorse every word of it. With burdened heart and broken spirit, we wandered through the world until we came across this truth flowing like a beautiful stream from the very throne of God, and we stooped down and drank of the life-giving waters, and now we live forever. It was a long time before I could really grasp this blessed truth. I thought in my heart, "If I could only see that this is so; if I could only have it proved to me that 'God is Love,' I should have something to live for, something to give me strength, something to cheer my heart." I looked at it from every point of view, and can say to you, with all confidence, I believe it, yea, I know it: "God is Love." I will give to you the arguments that proved it to me; may the Lord help you to reach the same glorious conclusion.

I looked into *the book of nature;* as I saw the bright stars above me, as I listened to the murmuring streams, as I beheld the golden grain in the fields, as I breathed the fresh, pure air, and walked out into the generous light of the sun, it seemed to me that nature with ten thousand voices was saying to my soul, "God is Love." The very things that are most needed by us in this world are most freely given and abundantly bestowed: air, water, light. Then, if you ask this question of nature, she gives her hearty endorsement to the text.

I turn, then, and look into *the evidence that Providence affords,* and I appeal to the experience of every one of you. I do not stop to ask how much sorrow you have seen; I will not question you as to how often you have followed loved ones to the grave; how you have been oppressed by poverty, and trampled under foot by misfortune; but I say, without fear of contradiction, that any one of us here, looking back over our whole life, taking it all and in all, will say that the Providence of God with us proves beyond a doubt that "God is Love." How undeserving we have been! how willingly will each one give his assent to those words of the Psalmist when he said, "If thou shouldst mark iniquity, who should stand?" Why, my friends, if God had dealt with us according to our sins, every one of us would have been lost long, long ago. I was talking with a poor widow the other day, and she was recounting some of her sorrows; but, in the midst of it all, she smiled and said, "I never complain; there are so many things I have to be grateful for that there is no ground for complaint." In God's dealings with us

we have a strong argument as to the truth of these blessed words.

But if I wanted to prove that "God is Love," and prove it beyond the possibility of a doubt, and prove it at once, I should not ask you to look into Nature or Providence; I would take you into *the realm of grace;* I would ask you to accompany me to Calvary, and as we stood gazing into the face of the lowly Jesus, and heard his last dying groan, and saw the blood drops as they came from his hands, his feet, his side, his brow, I would say to you, "What brought him here? Who offered him as a sacrifice for you? and for me?" The answer is at hand, "God is Love." If you and I had had anything to do with the salvation of men, and had sent one into the world to die for others, when they crucified him as they did Jesus with wicked hands, I think we would have been inclined to withdraw all further offers of salvation. We would have said, "I sent them a Saviour, and they have not received him; they have murdered him." Did God do this? No; when the time of crucifixion came, he said, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature, and begin right here at Jerusalem." I can imagine the disciples saying, "Lord, must we preach the gospel to those who plaited the crown of thorns? If we can find the man who drove the nails into thine hands, must we preach it unto him? If we can see the cruel soldier who thrust that spear into thy side, must we not pass him by?" "No," he would have said, "tell them that I love them, and will save their souls." Even after his departure from earth to heaven, God sent his Spirit

into the world to take of those blessed truths and exhibit them to the hearts of men.

There is further evidence yet. It seems to me that none of us could ask any more. The love of God goes still further, for even after a man has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, has enlisted as one of his followers, and become a bright and shining light in the church, sometimes he will sin, sometimes he will fall, sometimes he will wander far, far away. What does God do with a man like that? Does he say, "Let him go"? Does he say, "I have given him my Spirit—I have shown him the way of life, and now he has wandered away, I will have no more to do with him"? No, no; he tells us, "Go and bring my wandering child home; go tell him that my anger is turned away, and I will heal his backslidings." And then, in addition to all these things, we read it again and again—twice in this very chapter, "God is Love." These were the arguments that made this truth so precious to me; it is a light in my life; it is my strength in weakness; I bring it to you to-day, with these strong and unanswerable proofs, and commend it to you as a blessed truth that will ever cheer your heart, and strengthen you as you go on your journey through life.

Having seen that it is true, let us turn our attention very briefly to some practical and comforting thoughts. Now, you and I have our sorrows. I know not what the bitterness of your life is; you are not acquainted with mine; and when we think over the afflictions that overshadowed our lives and broke our hearts, there is a strange mystery about it that bewilders and confuses

the strongest mind. You have gone sometimes to the grave, and have listened to the last words spoken as a tribute of respect to the departed loved one; you have turned away to your home, and looked out upon life once more; the light was gone; the bright star that had beckoned you on from day to day had fallen from your sky; the world seemed lonely to you; when you undertook to discover some reason why God had done it, you found yourself further from any satisfactory ground than you were before. A man came to me some time ago, who had lost his wife; his little children were under the care of one who was not a Christian, and he couldn't get them away. He said, "I have looked at this matter from every point of view, and I cannot see the wisdom of it." It is not intended that we should see; but in the midst of these perplexing thoughts, how sweet it is to find a solution of the whole question in this short, but simple truth, "God is Love!" When I lost one very dear to my heart, a friend of mine wrote a letter to me, and said, "I will not try to comfort you, for human words are vain; let me remind you, however, that God has done this, and it is well done, or he would not have suffered it."

Here is comfort, too, to those who have once been zealous in the cause of our Saviour, and who, in an evil hour, have been tempted away—have wandered from the right path. You are very lonely to-day, my friend; you are not happy. How can God's child be happy away from him? Well did the sweet singer of Israel say, when asked to sing while they were in captivity: "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?" And here you are, a wanderer from God—

far, far from home. You are not satisfied. Let me tell you, "God is Love." Turn your face toward him to-day; you will find he is ever ready to welcome his returning children; and the message is to you, as well as to any one else. Take it for your own, and plead it before your Father's face.

What a blessed truth it is, too, to those who have never known the sweetness of the Saviour's love! You have tried the world; tried it, as a man told me on his death-bed, "to the very bottom, and found it bitterness." Montgomery thought that the world could give him all that his heart desired; and when the gospel was preached to him, he said there were pleasures enough on earth without thinking of the pleasures of heaven. But he tried it, and his verdict was like all the rest; he wrote to the church in the beautiful lines we sing sometimes:

"People of the living God,
I have sought the world around;
Paths of sin and sorrow trod;
Peace and comfort nowhere found.

"Now, to you my spirit turns,
Turns a fugitive unblest,
Brethren, where your altar burns,
Oh, receive me into rest!"

There is not a soul here to-day but may find sweet comfort in this truth, if you will only apply it to yourself, "God is Love."

THE WONDERFUL MAN

What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?—*Matt.* 8:27.

The occasion upon which our text was spoken must have filled the disciples with wonder and admiration. They had seen their Lord as the great Healer, with the lame, the halt, the blind, the fevered, the palsied around him, had watched them as they went away leaping and rejoicing and said among themselves, "What a tender and compassionate Saviour we have." They had heard him speak peace to guilty souls, and had exclaimed, "Was ever love like this?" They had seen him drive devils out of men and beheld them skulking away like cowering curs, but they had never seen him come in contact with the mighty storm, and when he arose and rebuked the raging elements of the tempest, they cried out, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Notice, if you please, THE OCCASION OF THIS QUESTION. It had been one of the busiest and most trying days in the life of Jesus. He had healed a demoniac, had given to a poor deranged man his mind again, and was not this a blessed work? We dislike to see the charred remains of a ruined building. It is sad to look upon the crumbled edifices, the scattered pillars, the fallen walls of a city in ruins, but what are these to the scattered fragments of a ruined intellect? And yet it was Christ's work to repair these

ruins and summon reason back to her throne. He had preached that day to the great multitude who seemed to crowd him into the very sea, and after his sermon only half-hearted followers offered to respond to his call. His zeal when observed by his friends had been called derangement. Oh, to be misunderstood, to have our best endeavors impugned, our purest, highest motives misconstrued, this is a trial few can bear. I have heard of a young man who lived for two old people; he cherished them, comforted them, sustained them. They leaned upon him, looked up to him, loved him, and yet "his friends" said he was doing all this to get a little money that the old folks had. They misunderstood Jesus. He was consumed with zeal, and they said he was beside himself. They said it of Paul. I only wish it could be said of some of us.

Then, too, he had been accused by the Pharisees of being in partnership with the devil. The works he had done for man and for God they called the devil's works. Was it strange, then, that he should say to his disciples, "Get your boat and let us go to the other side of the sea"? "Let us get away from this crowd." They started across—only six or eight miles—and no doubt Jesus said to his disciples, "I am tired, I will lie here on this steersman's cushion and rest a little," and he laid down and went to sleep. Soon a storm arose. One of those storms which travelers tell us drop upon the sea of Galilee as if from a cloudless sky. The men labored at their oars, but the waves were high. The wrathful skies bent their black bosoms to the earth and thundered their curses into the very face of nature. The wild winds caught the curling waters in their arms and

bore them up to meet and struggle with the clouds. Oh, it was a fearful night! Things that love storms love not such storms as that. And it grew worse. The boat begins to fill. The toiling men had doubtless often thought of waking the Master, but not yet, not yet awhile, they say, he is weary, let him rest. But the boat is fast filling, and they turn to Jesus, "Lord, save us, we perish." What a prayer! Does he answer? He rises but chides them for their want of faith. True, there was cause for fear, but was not the remedy at hand? It is not the absence of danger that should make us fearless, it is the *presence of Jesus.* Give me Jesus and I'll take the smallest boat and ride in any storm. He turns now and faces the howling tempest. Here is the picture for the artist to copy. See Jesus as he looks the frowning skies out of countenance. Without the tremor of a muscle, the quiver of a nerve, he looks out on that distracted night. "Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea." This is Matthew's quiet yet ever thrilling statement. He rebuked them, as much as to say, "Is it not enough that my friends should misunderstand and grieve me, not enough that devils should pursue, that enemies should persecute me, have the very elements conspired against me, PEACE, BE STILL!" *"And there was a great calm."* The winds went back like whipped lions to their lairs, and the submissive waves lay like purring kittens at his feet. No wonder that the astonished disciples should cry out, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

This suggests our second point. WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS HE? *He is a man,* remember that. A

man with a heart, and a head, and a helping hand. A man with an experience and therefore a sympathy that is worth something. But simply being a man was not enough. We are men and yet we might stand and rebuke the winds until our throats would split, and never stop a breeze. Where was the secret of his power? Was it in what he ate, as was once thought of Cæsar? Was it in his size, as was the case with Goliath? Or did his strength lie like Samson's in his locks? No, he was a man, but more than man. He was God. He who ordered that storm to be still was the God of the storm. He who spoke to those winds and waves was the One who made them. The voice that pierced the ear of the howling tempest, was the same voice that had said long years before, LET THERE BE LIGHT, *and there was light.* Yes, our Saviour is not only man but God. God and man. Man and God.

NOW LET US TURN THIS SUBJECT TO PRACTICAL USE. *We are all journeying across the sea of Galilee.* On this bank I see a cradle, on the other a grave. The journey is short, but likely to be tempestuous. Storms may come, aye, they will come. Sometimes they will seem to come upon us from a cloudless sky. Storms of affliction, of temptation, of misfortune, one after another. As soon as one is gone you think, "Well, surely the sun will come out now," but listen, do you hear the muttering thunder? It is another gathering storm. Oh, we have them here. This is a stormy world, the only calm is in that upper world above the clouds. I used to think that the old hymn, "I would not live alway," should not be in the books. This life, this world, was good enough for me; but I do not think

so now. I can sing the old song and make it my prayer:

"I would not live alway, I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way;
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here,
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer."

Jesus can calm the storm. Whether that storm be stirred in its wrath by men or devils, or whether it rises in my own heart Jesus can rebuke and cause it to be still. Call upon him; he may be asleep in your boat, wake him up, rouse him.

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high."

If Jesus is in our little boat she will not go down. She may be beaten by the storm, rocked by the waves, filled with water, baptized in the billows, but she will not, cannot, sink. A life-boat indeed is this that will ride through the roughest gale and bring us safe to port.

We shall reach the other shore ere long.

Some are nearly there. Soon you will find the bottom of the little boat touching the golden sands and the Lord will say, "Drop your anchor, furl your sail, step ashore, this is heaven." Oh, joy unspeakable! Look, the morning dawns, the sun rises without a cloud, thousands of the redeemed throng the shores, we are safe, safe forever, all honor and glory, might and majesty be to the Man, the God, that guided us safely through and brought us to our home.

THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you. —*I Peter* 3 : 15.

One of the most beautiful poems in the English language was written on the "Pleasures of Hope."

"Cease every joy to glimmer on my mind,
But leave, ah, leave the light of hope behind.
What though my wingèd hours of bliss have been
Like Angel visits, few and far between,
Her musing mood shall every pang appease,
And charm when pleasures lose their power to please."

Every one of us has a hope of some kind. "Hope" lives eternal in the human breast.

"The wretch condemned with life to part
Still, still on hope relies;
And every pang that wrings his heart
Bids expectation rise.

"Hope, like a glimmering taper light,
Adorns, and cheers the way;
And e'en, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray."

And yet, my friends, there is but one Hope. When Sir Walter Scott, the writer of so many splendid books, which engage the interest and charm the intellect of the world, lay dying, he said, "Bring me the Book!" His attendants rose excitedly and inquired, "What book, Sir Walter?" and the dying man answered,

"There is but one Book," and they brought him the Bible. So we might say there is but one Hope and that is the hope of an everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We may not be able to explain how it came to us nor can we tell what a blessing it has been in our lives, but we know that we have it and would not part from it for all the world.

When Dr. Fuller of Baltimore was in South Carolina, in his old home, on one occasion he stood preaching to the people among whom he had lived and whom he dearly loved. Suddenly looking down upon a well-known Christian man he called upon him to stand up and tell what the Lord had done for his soul. Responsive to the feeling in his heart, the old man rose promptly to his feet and stood there speechless. The tears were rolling down his face, and when at last he could find utterance he said: "Brother Fuller, the Lord has not given it to a poor man like me to tell what he has done for my soul!"

So you and I may see it has not been given to us to tell of the hope which has smoothed our pathway and held the light for us through many a dark and weary hour, yet we possess it and rejoice in the blessing which has been brought into our lives.

When I was pastor in a small town in Virginia, a lady came to me one Sunday and asked if I would come out in the country and see her son, who was suffering from nervous depression, and had come to the conclusion that his soul was lost and there was no hope for him. I gladly complied with her request and the next morning I went to see her boy. The conversation that we had gave me but little encouragement, but

I visited him repeatedly. We walked out into the woods nearby, sat under the shade of the great trees and talked about these things. We knelt and prayed, and yet there seemed to come no light to him. Finally one morning after several weeks as I entered the home, he met me with the faint suggestion of a smile upon his face. I saw at once that some change had transpired and was very anxious to know what it was. After much entreaty on my part he finally said, "Something happened to me last night before I went to bed, but I am afraid to tell you what it was." I insisted upon his telling me, and after long persuasion he said: "While I was praying beside my bed, I believe that God spoke peace to my poor soul." I almost shouted with joy which he met with decided opposition, saying: "I knew you would make more of it than was right, and that is why I did not want to tell you." "Very well," I said, "so far, so good. You are brighter to-day than you have been and it will be better to-morrow than to-day." Leaving him after a while I came to see him a day or two later on when he requested me to baptize him. I did this, and after a few days passed I met him one morning in the street, his form drooped, his head bowed, his hat pulled over his eyes. I stopped in front of him and let him walk up to me. He looked up and immediately down, saying as he did so: "You ought not to have done it, Mr. Wharton. I am not converted, not saved and you should not have baptized me." I put my hand on his shoulder and said to him: "All right, my boy, we will put an end to the whole thing right here. I will buy your hope, pay you the cash for it, have your name taken off the church books

and that will be the finish of your salvation. What will you take for your hope?" Suiting the action to the words I put my hand in my pocket as if I was about to produce the money to complete the transaction. He gazed steadily upon the ground for a moment and then asked: "Do you mean to say what I would sell my hope for and not have it any more?" "That's exactly what I mean," I replied. "It will be mine, and you will have it no more." Again he said, as if talking to himself: "Sell my hope in Jesus Christ?" I said: "Yes; you don't seem to have much so you would not ask a very great price. Tell me now, what you will take for it and I will buy it and you need have no trouble on the subject." Again he said with emphasis: "What would I take for my hope in Jesus Christ and not have it any more?" I replied: "That is it exactly." Then he looked into my eyes, his great dark eyes filled with tears: "Why, Mr. Wharton," he said, "I would not take ten thousand worlds of solid gold." "Ah!" said I, "that's just what I had expected." "Now then, with the hope worth all of that, you surely will have no more trouble. Good-by." And I left him.

What was true of that dear fellow is true of you and me. We would not take a thousand worlds like this for our hope of everlasting life.

If I should endeavor to define, no human words would be adequate to give the description. One Christmas Eve night in one of our large cities when people were thronging the streets making purchases of gifts to friends and loved ones, all happy in the thought of making others happy, it was discovered by some one that a little boy and girl were standing in front of a

toy shop window and the little boy was making frantic gesticulations as he was describing to the little girl the beauties in the window. There were toys of all kinds and various instruments for the pleasure of the children, dolls without number and all sorts of pretty things. Some one noticed that the little girl was blind, and upon inquiring the boy replied: "This is my sister. Mother did not have money to buy Christmas presents, and as my little sister is blind, she let me bring her out on the street so that I could try to tell her about all these lovely Christmas gifts." In a moment a group gathered around the little ones. They were taken into the store and in the shortest time those little arms were loaded with pretty presents, while a happy crowd looked on and followed after the little pair as they went expressing their thanks to the good friends and chatting to one another on their way home. I cannot tell you what the Christian's hope is and how in all ways it places the happy possessor, but I can pray God to fill your hearts and minds to overflowing with this precious hope and send you on your way rejoicing and thankful to whom you gave it. "Be ready always to give to every one that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you." Let us consider for a moment the importance of being ready to give this answer and then we shall be able to produce some of the reasons which the Christian has for his Hope.

First of all, God says we must be "ready." He would not have written to us, in this text to be ready, if it were not a matter of importance; and if I had no other reason to bring you but this, it is sufficient. But it makes us stronger Christians to be armed and

ready, at any time, with good reasons for our hope. If we go through this world with this blessed hope cheering our hearts and know that at any time we are able to give a "reason for the hope that is in us," we feel strong always because we know that whatever else may fail us, this will not. Riches we may have, but they take to themselves wings and fly away. Dear friends and companions may be around us, but they close their eyes in death. Health may fail. Fortune may frown. The stars may start from their spheres, the mountains depart, all things may perish; but hope, sweet hope, fails us not!

Again, it makes us more useful. When we come in contact with men who have tried the world and have become disgusted with it; whose souls are longing for something that the world cannot give; whose hearts are panting for happiness, and know not where to find it,—we can tell them of our hope; and, then, if we are able to give them good reasons for that hope, we shall win them to our Saviour.

I was holding a meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, a year or two ago, and a man came to my hotel to see me. He walked into the room, took a seat near me, and said, "I am not a believer in the Bible. I am what they call an infidel. I have attended your meetings. I know there is good in the Christian religion, and I want you to tell me how to get it." That is what the world wants; and those of us who can go forth with this bright hope in our hearts, and with good reasons for it upon our lips,—go forth, as useful men and women, to win unhappy souls away from their wanderings, to the way of everlasting life. Besides, it makes us happier

Christians. If you have a hope of salvation, and are satisfied with the reasons, that they are good and strong, there is a sweet peace that possesses your soul that may be enjoyed, but hardly described.

You see then, my friends, the great importance of being ready, at any time, to give an answer and a reason for the hope that you have.

The world has a right to ask our reasons. We profess to have this hope, and God says, if you have it, any man that asks you has a right to know your reason.

We come now to the most practical, and perhaps the most profitable part of this sermon, viz.:

To review some of the reasons for the Christian's hope.

The first reason I shall give is that it is a reasonable hope.

Now think of it for a moment. If you look around you in this world, you will find that our heavenly Father has made provision for everything that is necessary for our bodies. There is nothing that we could desire for the body that is not provided on this earth; but, strange to say, there is nothing on the earth that satisfies the soul!

Give a man all the wealth that this world contains, and it does not satisfy him. Let him drink every cup of joy, tread every flowery path of pleasure, but it does not satisfy his soul! Give him fame, until the world kneels at his feet, and he will weep because there are no more worlds for him to conquer. The world can never give the bliss for which we sigh! Is it not reasonable to suppose then, that, since God has provided everything on earth that is necessary for the comfort

and well-being of the body, and has provided nothing here that satisfies the soul,—is it not reasonable, I say, to hope, that, somewhere, provision has been made that will meet every demand of the immortal soul?

It is said that several astronomers, both in this country and in Europe, in making their calculations of the heavens, decided, that at a certain point in the heavens, there should be a star; but, they could not see it. They agreed upon their calculations that, according to the system and arrangement of other heavenly bodies, there ought to be a star at that point. After a long time, a telescope of great power was invented. They turned it in the direction where they thought the star ought to be, and, putting the eye to the instrument, and looking away off into space,—there was the little star, glimmering, twinkling, shining, as they had believed! We have made our calculations in the same way. We say, there ought to be a place somewhere that the great longings and aspirations of the human soul might be satisfied. Taking the Word of God, which is the telescope that enables us to look beyond the borders of time, we see heaven, and all its glories. We are waking from the sleep which death brings upon us here. We shall see and be satisfied!

My second reason for the hope that is in me is this,—

I take the Bible which professes to be the Word of God. I read it. There are things here that I cannot understand, mysteries that no human mind can solve, depths which cannot be fathomed by any created intellect. My conclusion is that man did not write the book. If human mind had conceived and written these thoughts, human mind could understand them. I am

brought to the conclusion that One, more than human, wrote it.

I take the facts stated, yet not explained, and believe them, though I cannot understand them; for the author of the book tells me that I shall understand them when the proper time shall come.

The very mysteriousness, the profoundness of some of the truths that are in the Scriptures, are, to me, a reason for my hope.

A little child will ask his father why it is that we have day and night? The father will reply, "Because the world turns over once in twenty-four hours." The child may say, "I don't understand that, it seems to me impossible." The father replies, "It is a fact, my child, and when you grow to be a man you will be satisfied that it is a fact." The little child goes out and tells his playmates that the world turns over. If they ask him to explain, he says, "I cannot explain, but father says it is so, and that I shall understand it some day." Now that is the way it is with these truths of God. Take the doctrine of the "Trinity," the "Resurrection," "Regeneration," and all those wonderful doctrines of the Word of God; we cannot understand them. Our Father tells us they are true, and that we shall understand them when we arrive at the full stature of manhood and womanhood in Christ Jesus. Yet, notwithstanding this, every truth necessary for our guidance, our salvation, our highest development and usefulness,—is so plain, that a little child may very readily understand it.

The third reason for my hope is this,—

When I take the Bible and read it, though I know

so little about it, I find that it knows all about me, and tells me who I am, what I am. It gives me rules, by which, if I will live, I am happy, useful, and a blessing to the world. It holds me up to myself, and gives me an insight into my being, and enables me to understand what life is. We turn away from the investigation of this blessed book with the same feelings which filled the heart of the woman of Samaria. When Jesus was talking to her, and told her about her life, she went into the city, saying, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did! Is not this the Christ?"

We say to the world, "Come, see a book, and the only book, that tells me all about myself! Is not this the Bible?" And we have another reason for the hope that is in us.

I have a fourth reason, which is found outside the Bible,—

Going back into history, digging up old cities, looking into ancient vaults, and studying the traditions of men, we have witnesses that step readily upon the stand, and testify to the truths of the statements in God's holy word.

Still there is another reason,—

When our Saviour was here upon earth, he said to those who were around him, "Believe me not for my words, but believe me for my works."

I ask you to look at the works of this Word upon whose promises our hopes are built.

Wherever the Bible has gone, men, and communities, and nations have been ennobled, developed, lifted up; clouds of darkness, ignorance and superstition have vanished before the approaching light.

Take individual cases; you have seen men, who were drunkards, so changed that they have seemed to be new creatures; and, they were new creatures. Ask what did it? It was the power of this truth!

I could detain you here for hours relating incidents that have come under my own observation of men and women, whose lives have been so wonderfully changed, that it amounted to no less than a miracle. Well might the glorious Apostle say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!"

And then, we come to our own experience. When I look into my own life, and think what I once was, and what I now am, I see that there has been a power at work in me, above and beyond my own strength, which has wrought in me a change that gives a reason, satisfactory, to me at least, beyond controversy, that my hope is good.

If I were confined in prison, and the Governor of the State should write a letter to me, saying, "At nine o'clock to-morrow morning, the jailer will come in, and will take the fetters from your limbs; and the next morning, at nine, he will come and open the door and set you free," I should look with great anxiety for the fulfillment of that promise.

If, on the morrow, as the clock was striking nine, I should hear the jailer's key in the lock, see him open the door, and approach me, and begin to take off my fetters, I should be satisfied that the Governor was fulfilling his promise. And, then, if the jailer, when he went away, should say to me, "I will be here to-morrow morning, unlock the door and set you free," I should

look with all confidence for his return, and for my freedom on the next day.

If Jesus Christ tells me that he will come to me, and take the fetters of sin, and the chains of evil habit from my imprisoned soul, and that, by and by, he will come again and set my soul for ever free from the cares and sorrows of earth, I should expect a fulfillment of that promise.

Is it not true that he has delivered us from the chains that once bound us, and shall we not hope, with confident expectation, that he will come, after a while, and give us our entire freedom?

We have experienced the fulfillment of some of his promises, and this gives us a good strong reason for the hope that he will carry out, to the very letter, every other promise that he has made.

When we come down to our own experience, we have reasons that cannot be contradicted. John Vine Hall was a distinguished Christian name in England. He was noted, in his youth, for his dissipation, his worldliness, his recklessness. His parents, his wife, his children seemed to lose all hope that he could ever be reclaimed. It is said, that sometimes, when he would feel the appetite and craving for strong drink coming upon him, he would go to some of his friends, and ask them to bind him, that he might not be able to go where he could get anything to drink.

After he had fallen among the lowest of the low, one day, a good man induced him to go to church. He listened to the preaching of the gospel. He called upon Christian people to pray, that the hands of that God, whom they loved and served, might be raised in

his behalf. God heard the prayer; took away the appetite for strong drink; set the captive free; and he became eminent as a godly man, and did great good in the cause of Christ. He lived to a good old age, and when he approached the closing years of his life, he was met one day by an infidel. This proud philosopher knew that John Vine Hall was a humble, earnest Christian, and a very intelligent man; he said to him, "Mr. Hall, I have heard a good deal about the Christian religion, and I have always been able to refute every argument that was advanced in its defense. I want you to give me a reason for your religion—your hope as a Christian—a reason that I cannot answer!" The old man laid his hand upon his heart, as he looked into the face of the infidel, and said to him: "I have a reason in here, sir, that no man can answer."

Yes, my brethren, it is true of every one who has this good hope. There is a reason for it in his own experience, in his own heart, that all the infidels of earth could never answer.

This blessed hope is founded upon the promises of God, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and with glad and happy hearts, we can go through the world singing,

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

THE WANDERING BOY

And when he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my father. And he arose and came to his father.—*Luke* 15:17, 18, 20.

All of us are fond of pictures. Jesus spoke in pictures, thought in pictures, he paused sometimes to say, "Unto what shall I liken it." In all of his preaching it is said he did not speak without parables and parables, you know, is just another name for stories. Pictures; the world is running after moving pictures and the reason is evident. Deep down in every human nature is a fondness for the picture, whether it is on canvas or the printed page or related in a story. This wandering boy commonly called "The Prodigal Son" is only a picture, a story such as comes to our notice almost any day. When we hear about him we feel like saying, "Oh, yes, he just wanted to go out and see the world and have a good time. It is all true to nature. He was not a bad boy. Some one had been writing back from that country and said there was a fine opening for young men. This boy had heard of it all and concluded he would go. He started, went astray and wandered around until certain occurrences and experiences in his life brought him to himself."

God says in his Word that any man or woman who lives in this life away from God is out of his head. He is not in his right mind, and, oh, how much it takes

sometimes to bring a man to himself. This young fellow came to grief.

Let us see if we can follow him in the steps that led to this sad condition. It was not because he was a young man. There is no reason why a young man should not be as good as any other. It is not a crime to be young. Nor was it because he left his father. Other young men have left the parental roof and have done well. Neither was it on account of his going into a far country. Many young Europeans have come here and succeeded better than if they had stayed at home. He came to grief, because *he spent his substance in riotous living.* "Come easy, go easy," was his motto. He gambled, drank, drove fine horses, attended theaters, played billiards, treated his friends, and got to the bottom of his pocket in a short time. Then "he began to be in want" and "there arose a mighty famine in that land." Of course. Did you ever know it to fail? As long as you had plenty of money everybody else had plenty. But wake up some morning without a dollar and start out among those who have been eating and drinking up your money, your strong friends, and try to borrow a little and you will find that a mighty famine has arisen in the land. There was no one to help him. He sought employment; no one wanted him. At last some man sent him to feed his hogs, the meanest occupation on earth for a Jew. Now look at him, in rags, with no money, no friends, nothing to eat, miserable. That young man had come to grief; and how many there are just like him! The other day a young man who had lost a fine situation came to me and asked me to get him back. He had

gambled and drunk and spent his employer's money, and lost his place. *He had come to grief.* Walking along the street a few nights ago, I saw a man lying drunk upon the street with no one to care for him. *He had come to grief.* And so will every man who spends his substance in riotous living. I hold up the picture of that prodigal boy, homeless and helpless, and ask you to take warning, before it is too late. But, perhaps, I speak to prodigals here. You are far from home. You have spent your substance and now you are not feeding hogs exactly, but you are fattening theater-managers and faro-dealers and bar-keepers. I have something better to offer you: a happy life, a useful occupation and a home in heaven. These men are getting rich out of your ruin. They take money from your purse, bread from the mouths of your loved ones, happiness from your homes and hope from your hearts. But let us take another look at the prodigal; he has come to grief, but there is something better.

He Came to Himself. Happy day when the young man *comes to himself.* Here is the Spirit of God manifesting himself in awakening the sinner. He alone can make us see ourselves in a true light. We often have to pass through many dark experiences before we come to ourselves. We are not willing to take advice; we must go and see for ourselves, and then when we are almost ruined we find our mistake. I think about the first thing this young man saw, when he came to himself, was *his own helplessness.* Money gone, friends gone, depressed in spirits, he discovered for the first time that he was a poor, helpless wanderer. With a heavy heart he thought of home, and the loved ones

there, of the plenty in his father's house, of the happiness of the servants. Why, he would think of the pet cat and the favorite dog and think how much happier they were than he. No doubt the tears went stealing down his face, as he thought over his utterly helpless condition. And did we not see this when we were sinners, away from God, dear friends? Oh, how our hearts did ache! Far from heaven and going farther, and no one to lend a helping hand; sad and desolated indeed was our condition. Again, when he came to himself he found that *he was a sinner.* He had not thought of that before. In fact, he had not given that subject any consideration. Many young men here are in just that state of mind. It never occurs to them that they are sinning against heaven every day. Oh, that you might come to yourself and see yourself as God sees you. Whenever that happy hour comes that you realize that you are a sinner, then and there make the confession to God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Still another thought entered into his reflections. He saw his helplessness, he realized that he was a sinner, but blessed truth, he remembered there was *help somewhere.* In his father's house there was bread and to spare. And so there is help for you and for me, in our Father's house. We have a rich Father; he owns all the earth, and all the skies, and all the rich treasures of heaven. Oh, yes, we may be poor, helpless, homeless sinners, but we have a Father in whose house are many mansions, where our loved ones, and our Saviour, and our God are anxiously awaiting our return. His

reflections came to an end by culminating in *a glorious resolution.* "I will arise and go to my father." Here was the turning point in his life. It was a great cross to do this. Pride had to come down in the dust. He must go back home a perfect failure and beg for mercy, but he made up his mind to do it. This is what God wants us to do; we have tried the world; it has served us a sad turn; we are sick of it, and feel like exclaiming with Montgomery—

"People of the living God,
I have sought the world around;
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found."

It takes a great deal sometimes to bring a man to his senses. I was talking on one occasion with a fine old gentleman who was an excellent citizen, a good church member and a valuable man in the community. I asked him to tell me of his conversion for it was an experience that I always loved to hear. When I asked that question a shadow fell upon his face. His head dropped, his eyes were downcast. I caught on at once. "No, no," I said, "don't tell me, it is all right. We will talk of something else." "But, no," he said, "I will tell you. As much as it pains me you can use it sometimes and God may make it a blessing to some one else." He then went on to give me the following account of his conversion: "When I married my young wife, who was one of the finest girls in the neighborhood, a joy in her home and community, I was occasionally addicted to drink. I did not drink to excess but felt that I had the strength to drink when I pleased

and let it alone when I wished. She admonished me gently on several occasions before our marriage and I promised her I would give it up and for her sake not drink at all. Several years passed away of a very happy married life, and God blessed our union with a sweet little girl. I could never tell how it came about, but I suppose with a strong social nature and surrounded by young friends, all of whom believed in having a good time, I began again to take an occasional social glass. My wife in her own sweet way would occasionally warn me that there was danger. I could not see it. The habit grew upon me and finally became so fixed and deeply rooted in my nature that every once in a while I would drink until I was drunk, and it affected me so that I seemed to be in a state of insanity while under the influence of liquor. I had been on a spree for many days and was trying to recover. Hungry, cold, dispirited, I walked along the street in this little village, not having the heart to go home where I could get everything that I wanted, and above all the unfailing kindness of a devoted wife, but I had not the heart, nor the face to go. I wandered into a shop where some men who were wheelwrights were welding a large wagon tire and for that purpose had built a circular fire on the dirt floor of their shop. I sat on a box or something of the kind near the fire and with my face in my hands, my elbows upon my knees, I gave myself up to remorse and despair while I was warming by the fire. I cannot tell how long I sat there. But my little girl, then about five years of age, came in, walked up and spoke to me, her little lips near my ear, her quick breathing showing she had been

running and said hastily: 'Daddy, dinner is ready. Mamma sent me for you. I have been looking for you all up and down the street. Please come. Mamma is waiting for you and me.' I said to her, 'Get away. I don't want any dinner,' not looking up, my face still buried in my hands. She came up and patted my cheek and said almost sobbing, 'Mamma told me not to come back without you. Daddy, please come on. She is so sorry she is crying for you.' With that, I said, 'Get away,' and I thrust her from me, again placing my hand over my face. I heard a noise and scuffle but did not look up. Suddenly I felt something like a vise grasping my shoulder, shaking me violently. One of the great strong blacksmiths said to me, 'Look here, you drunkard, you have killed your child!' Then I looked and my precious little girl lay gasping in almost her last breath. I was sober then. I took her in my arms, charred and helpless as she was by the flames. I carried her to my wife who was waiting, weeping. I laid my little darling in her arms and said as I did so, 'Here is our precious baby and I have killed her.' 'Oh,' he said, 'Mr. Wharton, as I stood behind the iron doors of the jail shaking them with the violence of a crazy man, I begged people to come and shoot me, cut my throat, put me out of existence, but there was no such mercy for me. When my trial was over, the jury came in with their verdict of not guilty. Of course not. How could I kill my own child, the jewel of my soul? My wife had not dared to enter the courtroom. With a word of warning from the judge, which seemed to bear in it a note of tender sympathy, I walked out of the court house and went a few blocks away to my

home. Some one had preceded me and told the news to my dear wife. She was standing in the door and when I approached her she kissed me and said, 'Come in, dear, let us not say anything about it. Come in with me.' I entered the house and with her arm about me she knelt and I at her side, and then and there I gave my heart to God. But think of it, my dear brother; think of it, at what a cost!"

So I say it sometimes takes a great deal to bring those to their senses who have turned their backs on God and are wandering far from the father's house.

Make up your mind, then, that you will arise and go to your Father; that you will leave the companionship of strangers; that there is something better for you than feeding the devil's hogs; that you will turn your back upon the "far country" and make for the promised land; and may God speed and bless you on your journey home.

He Came to His Father. All his good resolutions would have amounted to nothing if he had not put them into effect. He came to his father. Something must be done, and he did it. His case was desperate; he was starving in a strange land and soon would die. Oh, young man, is not this your condition? It was mine once. I was far from God, and like Mazeppa bound to the wild horse of uncontrollable passions, I was rushing to ruin; but God in his mercy checked me in my mad career. I came to myself; I came to my Father. Let me tell you your Father wants you to come home. God has watched you through all these years, and is anxious for your return. Look at this prodigal. See him as he gets near the house; his

heart beats high; he wonders how he will be received. Presently the old man walks out on the porch. He looks across the fields, sees some one coming; who can it be? "It looks like my poor child, walks like him; but, oh, how thin and pale and weary! it cannot be; yes, it is he, it is he!" and he runs out and falls upon his neck and kisses him. Ah! what a happy time it is when God and the poor wandering sinner meet. Ring the bells, slay the fatted calf, tune up the instruments, shout and sing, the lost is found, the dead is alive, the long absent wanderer has come home at last. What we need as young men, is *resolution* and *action.* There are so many obstacles in our way; but all these, instead of keeping us back, should be greater incentives to urge us on. The grandest thing that any man can do, when he finds he is wrong, is to get right. Now every man is born wrong, and he keeps going wrong until he comes to himself, and resolves to go back. But how are we to get back? There are hills to climb, rivers to cross, dangerous and perilous paths. How are we to get back? Just put ourselves in the hands of Jesus and he will lead us home. "I am the way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He came all the way down to earth just to hunt up and save such prodigals as you and me. I have given myself to him and am satisfied that I am saved; and so it will be with you if you are willing to trust him. He is our elder brother, and a far better one than the prodigal had, for he has left his home and followed us and suffered and died, that he might get us to go home. Let us follow in his footsteps and they will lead us home, and when we get there, our Father will come out to

meet us, and will feed us on the bread of life, and clothe us with the robe of righteousness and put a crown on our heads and a harp in our hands, and we will be so happy we shall forget that we ever wandered.

I had an experience once in my life which was very near akin to the story of this wandering boy. Soon after the Civil War in the year 1865-1866, the people in the South were in a bewildered, poverty stricken, devastated condition. They had no money, no occupation. Their lands were left to them, but hardly any prospect of cultivating the farms. April had seen the close of the War.

Springtime was beckoning the farmer to proceed to plant his crops. But the whole South was in a state of paralysis. I presume there is no land in all the world and no people under the shining sun where there has been such a speedy recovery and such wonderful prosperity as has marked the succeeding years in the history of the South.

It came to pass that I met one day a gentleman who said to me that the Governor of Mexico was offering lands free to men of the South who would go there to live. Six hundred and forty acres to a man with a family, 320 acres to a single man. He urged me to go, saying it would be a fine opportunity for me to make a fortune. I went to my father and broke the news to him. He replied, much to my dismay: "It is all right, son, but how will you get there?" It had not occurred to me that it would take money to pay my way and my poor father was as guiltless as I was of holding any of that sort of stuff in his possession at

that time. I went to the gentleman and told him the situation. He said to me, "I will lend you the money to go down there," and when I returned to my father I found him much of the same mind, for he did not want me to go. He said, "My son, you had better stay here with me and let us toil together with your brothers." There were five of us boys in all, and we could make a living without any trouble. But I must go, and so I insisted, and finally, though he did not consent, he withheld his opposition. The result was that in a few weeks I found myself under the tropical sun of Mexico without a dollar and with nothing to do. I went to a prominent ex-confederate, Governor Harris of Tennessee, and made known my condition. Like the prodigal who had spent all, I began to be in want. The Governor sent me into a field to hoe corn at fifty cents a day. The hottest sun that ever burned a lazy boy and the longest corn rows that were ever laid out in a field made up my task that day. I was beginning already to repent of my wandering and to long for home. In addition to this I took the chills and fever and then, added to my sorrow, I received a letter from my little sweetheart back in the States telling me she had decided to go with another boy. All of these things had an increasing weight upon my heart and mind. We were living in little shacks in a village called Carlotta, the name of the Queen of Mexico at that time. It was a most uninviting settlement. Poor water, all sorts of insects that could possibly be thought of and no outlook whatever except the prospect of getting that promised land. Things grew worse every day and finally the day came when it was announced

that the lands would be given out. Though I was pretty nearly played out with chills and fever, working in the hot sun and hardly enough to eat, I walked nine miles with several others to the little town of Cordova, Mexico, where the officials were giving out the land. I received the certificate for three hundred and twenty acres for my farm, which happened to be very near our little settlement. That afternoon I went out to take a look and found it all under bushes and shrubberies with an occasional banana or coffee tree, and perhaps a pomegranate. Upon an old envelope that I had in my pocket I wrote with a lead pencil in large letters, "For Sale. Apply to H. M. Wharton at the Village Nearby." I went back to our little bamboo shack where two or three fellows besides myself were making headquarters, and I had another chill. Several days elapsed when, as I was lying on the little cot and watching the reptiles, spiders, lizards and other inhabitants of that region running in and out and around the place where I was lying sick and distressed, I heard the voice of a man saying to some one, "Is there a man named Wharton in any of these booths?" I heard him plainly enough but had troubles enough without looking for any more, for I could not imagine that he was after any good with me. By and by he said, "I see he has some land for sale." I yelled at the top of my voice, "Yes, right here, come in!" He came to the door, announced his name and the state he was from and said he had seen my notice. I leaped from the bed as best I could and accompanied him to the tract of land. He told me he had come too late to get any and that all the land was given out and he wanted

to know what I asked for my three hundred and twenty acres. I told him ten dollars an acre. He said, "I will give you one dollar an acre." Accordingly, I said, "All right, you may have it; anything to get home." For that was my heart's desire and prayer to God at that time. He said, "Come on and I will make the payment, but I can only pay half now." I said, "That will be all right." I made a lightning calculation in my mind and was sure that one-half the amount would pay my way back home. Oh, you who are away from God, sell out or give away anything and everything that will help you to get back where you belong. The next day I was on my way to Vera Cruz where I expected to take a ship for New York and then home, sweet home. When I arrived at Vera Cruz and applied for passage to New York, they informed me that there were no tickets being sold because of the fact that there was an epidemic of yellow fever in that city. "Well, then," I said, "it is all over with me. I am pretty nearly gone anyway and I don't see how I can do anything more." As a last effort I employed a Mexican to take me in his little boat out to the big ship standing at anchor about a mile away. When we got there I called to the captain and told him I wanted to go to New York. He said they were not taking any passengers on account of the epidemic. I told him with very earnest and tearful words that I wanted to go to my father and that I had traveled a long way on the back of a mule. He said, "When did you get to Vera Cruz?" I told him about an hour ago. "Then you did not spend the night here last night?" "No, sir," I answered. Turning to some of the men he said, "Drop that rope ladder and let

him come up." If there ever was joy in my poor heart, you bet your life I was full of it then. I climbed up the ladder and turned to the captain and thanked him that he had allowed me to come on board. It was just that way with my salvation. Like that other wandering boy we have been thinking about, I was down and pretty nearly out and the captain of my salvation ordered to drop the rope and let me climb aboard of the old ship that has never lost a passenger.

Upon my arrival at home my father sat on the front porch in an attitude of thought. His elbow resting on the banister, his face upon his hand and looking down as if in deep meditation. As I crossed the street, tired, weary, sick, I heard a lady sitting near my father, saying, "There is your son from Mexico." In another moment I was in my father's arms and had his welcome home. We did not have the music and the dancing nor did we slay the fatted calf as was the case with the prodigal boy. His father was looking and thinking and expecting his coming and ran to meet him when he saw him as mine did me. That father represents God, and the only time in all the Bible where he is spoken of as being in a hurry is when he runs to meet the returning sinner.

The next day I was taken ill with a burning fever and for six weeks lay on the borderline between life and death. Our dear mother had died during the War. The burden of five sons going into the army was too much for her poor heart. During my illness, to the best of my recollection, night or day whenever I awoke or, being delirious, came to my mind father was sitting at my bedside either holding my hand or his own dear

hand on my head and his invariable question was, "Is there anything I can do for you, son?" And my constant reply was, "No, father. Just stay by me, don't leave me." And he never did.

And so it has been and so it ever will be when our heavenly Father speaks to those who believe in him and who come to him, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?*

Matt. 22:42.

God has given us minds, and he wants us to think with them. It is a great mistake for any one to believe that the religion of Jesus Christ is something that must be accepted without a reason. Our Saviour steps into your path, and says, "Look at me, think of me; investigate my character and my works; make up your minds as to what you think of me, and let that thought govern your life!"

I verily believe that the reason why so many people are not Christians is because they do not think. Sometimes men say, in a very knowing manner, that they will not accept anything that they cannot understand; and because there is mystery in the doctrines of Christ they will not accept his religion.

The fact is, there is mystery about everything. The growing blade of grass, the shining light, the very beating of your heart, are all mysteries; and to say that we will not accept what we cannot understand is the height of folly.

One day a Quaker fell into conversation with a young man, and the subject of religion was brought up. The young man said to his old friend: "I do not accept anything that I have not seen, or that some one else has

*This sermon was preached in Central Music Hall, Chicago, Ill., September 27, 1893, during the Great Gospel Campaign at the World's Fair, led by Mr. D. L. Moody. He was present on the platform at the time.

not seen. All of this talk about faith and the working of the Spirit is mysterious and invisible. Nobody has ever seen a spirit, and therefore I do not accept any of it." The Quaker replied: "Thy argument would get thee into trouble. Did thou ever see thy brains? Did any one else ever see thy brains? Then thou dost not think thou hast any brains!"

On the other hand, it is said of Lord Littleton and Gilbert West, two distinguished men of England, that on one occasion, both being infidels, they agreed to expose the fallacy of the Christian religion. They said it was a sham and a delusion, and ought to be held up to the scorn and contempt of the world. To carry out their purpose each chose a subject. Lord Littleton took the "Conversion of Saul," Gilbert West "The Resurrection of Christ."

They were to meet at the end of three months, and when they came together each was to present his article. At the appointed time they met, and Lord Littleton said to his friend: "West, I have prepared my paper, but it is very different from what I had expected. I am a convert to Christianity, and believe in the gospel of the Son of God." "So am I," replied his friend, and both from that day became the devout followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

When I attended the University of Virginia, as a law student, Professor Minor recommended this article of Lord Littleton's as one of the finest arguments in the English language.

If you have not given this subject the thought it demands, may I not ask that you will at least spend half an hour with me this morning in contemplation

of this theme of themes—"What think ye of Christ?"

I wish to deal fairly with both sides, and we will first take up the side held by the enemies of Christ. Let us see if we can agree with them. If not, we shall then turn to see what his friends think of him, and whether we agree with them.

His enemies say he was an impostor. Do you agree with them there? They said he was leagued with the devil, in partnership with hell, and his deeds were the deeds of darkness. "What think ye of Christ?"

Do you believe he was an impostor? I fancy I hear you reply, "An impostor? No! The Saviour whom my mother believed and loved, and in whose arms she died! He who has been the stay and support and joy of countless millions. Jesus an impostor! No!—perish the thought!"

Well, then, you cannot agree with them in that. Let me ask another question. They say that the inducements that he offered were insufficient. It is a good reason for not serving him if it is true. If I were employed by a man in Chicago day by day, and another should come to me and say, "Wharton, I would like you to come into my employment," I would have a perfect right to ask him what inducements he had to offer.

If I am serving the devil, and Jesus Christ comes to me and asks me to leave this master and follow him, I have every right to say, "Lord, what will you do for me? What inducements have you to offer?" If what his enemies say is true—that his inducements are insufficient—it is fatal to our cause. But is it true? Let us see.

He promises pardon for every sin. I know not what

course others may take, but for my part I should willingly serve him all of my days, only to know that every sin and mistake of my life had been covered by his grace, blotted out by his precious blood, and forever forgiven and forgotten. But is this all? He says, "I will go with you all your days; I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." To have his presence; to know that wherever we are, at home or abroad, on the land or on the sea, we have the strength and the help of this true and unfailing friend, tender in his sympathies, almighty in his power, is an inducement that the angels of heaven would gladly enjoy. But he tells us more: "I will be with you when you come to die, and, after a life well-spent in my service, doing good all your days, I will receive you to myself when you leave this world, and take you to the world of perfect bliss." Are not these inducements sufficient? "What think ye of Christ?"

But his enemies say that he is not able to carry out his inducements. If they be right in this, surely we shouldn't follow one who is not able to perform what he promises, who offers inducements that cannot be carried out. But is this true?

I am speaking to-day to hundreds, if not thousands, who can say, "He promised peace to me in the pardon of my sins, and he has given it to me." Can you not say, "I have the peace that passeth understanding? No longer is my soul oppressed by the recollection of unforgiven sin; no more do I feel the weight of guilt upon my heart. I have found peace and rest and joy in him."

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one,
Lay down thy head upon my breast;
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad."

How about the promise that he will be with us? Is it not true, in time of affliction and temptation, he has been your only help, and when you have had no other refuge, you have found joy and protection in him?

Some years before the death of my father we had a re-union in our old home in Virginia. My only sister, who lived in Kentucky at that time, was expected on the afternoon train. Instead of coming, she sent us a letter, saying that she was all ready for the trip, but the night before the time for her to leave, her little home and all she had was destroyed by fire. "Think not," she said, "that I am grieved or broken-hearted. While I stood in the street, holding my little boys, one by each hand, and saw our home swept away from us, the spirit of my gentle mother seemed to come to me with the strength and grace of my Saviour. I could stand there in the dark and sing,

'When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design,
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.'"

How could she have done that if Jesus had not been with her? But is he really present when we come to

die? I said to a doctor once: "You have had many years of experience, and have known of the death of many Christians. Can you tell me of one whose faith failed him on his death-bed?" His reply was, "No, sir; I never heard of such a case."

When Dr. Wingate, of North Carolina, lay dying, his lips moved, and his wife listened to hear what he was saying, and heard these words in a low whisper: "O Jesus, I knew you would be with me, but I did not think it would be so sweet as this."

What think ye of Christ? Do you think he can carry out the inducements that he offers to his followers? Can you agree with his enemies in the charges they make against him?

I believe, my dear friends, that if you will solemnly and honestly consider him, and the blessings that he bestows upon our poor, lost, and broken-hearted world, you will turn in disgust from these charges and taunts of his enemies, and say with the Roman officer, as he rode away from the cross, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Now let us turn the picture to the brighter side; let us see what his friends think of him, and if you can agree with them. We believe that he is the Saviour of the world—the only hope of a lost and ruined race. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus Christ came into this world to seek and to save the lost, and that there is none other name under heaven by which we must be saved? We believe that he is the Son of God, and that as such he is able to save unto the uttermost all who come to God by him.

Sometimes I have heard men question his divinity,

but never since my own heart and life were changed by his power have I doubted that he is the Son of God. And my experience and observation as a minister of the gospel for twenty years have only confirmed me in this belief. When I think of the thousands who have been blessed; their homes made happy; the husband, the father, the child, made to rejoice in a new-found hope, and to become a rich blessing to the loved ones there, I cannot doubt that Jesus is divine. What think ye?

Furthermore, we believe he is our own personal Saviour. There is a wonderful power in our religion when we bring it down to ourselves. I should love to stand at the gates of heaven and see all this vast congregation pass through. I should like to see Mr. Moody as he goes into that abundant inheritance which awaits him; I should like to see you one by one in the great joy of that blessed hour: but it would break my heart to feel that I must turn away and be lost forever. Thank God I can say to-day he is my Saviour! Can you?

We believe that he is a faithful Saviour—he does everything that he promises. He will never leave or forsake those who have put their trust in him, and when we ask him for blessings, he gives us more than we expect. Although Mr. Moody is a man of great faith,—and I trust he will pardon the personal allusion—I undertake to say that though he may have expected great things from God in the evangelization of this magnificent city, and the wonderful gatherings of the people day by day, yet God has done far more for him than he ever thought or dreamed. We believe he is a loving and devoted Saviour, with the tenderest

sympathies, and constant, watchful care over those who have committed themselves to him.

No mother ever listened more eagerly for the voice of her child, nor ran more hastily to its relief, than does our Saviour, as he watches over the poorest and weakest of his disciples.

We think that he is worthy of our love, our faith, our obedience. There is no gift too precious to lay at his dear feet, and no commandment that we should not gladly obey. What think ye of Christ?

Let me hang before your minds to-day two pictures, and I shall ask you to say, in your own souls, which of these represents your conduct as to your belief in Christ:

There were two young men in Virginia, one of them the child of poor but respectable parents. He conceived the idea of studying medicine in the city of Richmond, and his old father and mother, by every sacrifice, toiled on to meet his wants through the session. On the day that the young man was to receive his diploma, his old father went down to Richmond to witness what to him was the grandest and most joyful event of his life. He wore his old farm clothes, and the old hat that had shaded his face from many summer suns, and as many winter snows and rains, all for his boy's sake.

As he was walking along the street in Richmond, he met his son in company with two other young physicians, who were to graduate that day. Immediately he spoke to his boy, and would have thrown his arms around him, but the young man held him off, and said, "Stand back; I don't know you." The old man, in utter bewilderment and astonishment, said,

"Why, John, don't you know your father?" He said, "You are not my father," and turned and walked away.

The broken-hearted old man stood and wept and mourned as the passers-by looked on and wondered what had come to pass. That night the diploma was received but the father was not there. The young physician settled in Virginia, soon became the victim of drink, and died a horrible death.

Some of you will almost doubt the truth of this story. I am sorry to tell you it is well authenticated by my own personal friends. And yet, let me say, there are many here to-day who have turned their backs on Jesus Christ and God their Father, and say to them, not only by their lips, but by their lives, "You are not my Saviour, you are not my Father; I do not know you." Oh, may God help you to turn from such a course to-day!

The other young man was a student at one of our Virginia colleges. His mother was a widow, and went with her boy to the little town, where she did washing for the students in order to make money enough to support her son during his college course.

When the day of his graduation came he went down to see her, and said, "Mother, I want you to be there to-night in a front seat." "Why, my child," she responded, "I have nothing but this old faded dress and the old bonnet that I have worn for several years. You would be ashamed of me." "No, mother," he said; "grant me this favor and come." She little cared what others might say so she pleased her child. She went, and took her seat in the front of the audience that night.

When the president of the faculty gave the young men their diplomas, as he came to her boy he said: "Ladies and gentlemen: I have the honor of presenting this young man with the college medal, for he goes off not only with a well-deserved diploma, but the highest honors of our institution."

Taking the medal from the hand of the Dean of the Faculty and lightly bowing his acknowledgment, in the presence of the great assembly, he walked down from the platform and stood before his old mother who sat before him unspeakably happy at the thought that her boy had won these honors. He pinned the medal upon the faded old calico dress, saying as he did so: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is my mother. It is due to her to say that all the success I have won has been made possible through her untiring labors and her unfailing faith." "Mother," he continued, "this is yours, but for you I never could have won these honors," and kissing her, his arms gently about her neck, he said, "God bless you, my precious mother."

Friends, do you see anything like yourselves in this? Is it not true that when you and I shall look into the face of him who loved us and gave himself for us, who saved us and never forsook us under any circumstances, we will say, Lord Jesus, every trophy I have won, every victory I have gained, every good deed I have done, all, all are due to you, for without you I would not have been here and my life would not have been a blessing to those around me. As I come along my journey home all honor and glory and power and might and dominion be unto you, my blessed Saviour.

ALWAYS THE SAME

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day and forever.—*Heb.* 13:8.

I have often heard, "There is nothing in a name," but I am not ready to endorse that assertion. Sometimes we have heard the name of a little child, and it has awakened a thousand memories in the heart; for that name was the name of a mother, wife or child, dear to us, yet long gone from the earth. And so there is a name that is dear to every Christian; that name is JESUS. It seems to me that Jesus has written his name not only in our minds, but in our hearts; for even though we may lose our reason, we remember him. It was my painful duty not long ago to accompany a very dear friend who was taking his wife to the asylum. As we approached the building she seemed to realize what was before her, and looking up, a smile came over her face and she said, "I am not afraid; I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." It is true also of those who are approaching the hour of death. I was once called to the Aged Women's Home, in this city, to the bedside of an old lady who was dying. When I approached her the attendant said, "This is the minister," calling me by name. She said, "I don't remember him; I cannot remember names; my memory seems to be failing me." I said to her, "Sister, do you remember Jesus?" "Oh, yes!" she replied, "I could never forget him." This is the experience, I

think, of every Christian; the name of Christ is very precious to us all. Whenever a preacher announces as his theme in the pulpit, JESUS, no one is alarmed, for there is something in the very sound of that name that we love to hear. You know, in the gospels it is written, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." He had something to tell them that they wanted to hear. Even the children ran to meet him. Nobody was afraid of Jesus,

The apostle might have stopped here, and said, "Jesus is the same yesterday, and to-day and forever," for there is a depth of meaning in the name itself. It means Saviour. You remember when the angel came to him, he said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins." Whenever we mention that name, it carries with it the name "Saviour"—Jesus our Saviour.

But, you will observe, it is "Jesus Christ." There is a meaning in the word "Christ" also. It means Crowned; it means King; and if I should read it "Saviour King," instead of "Jesus Christ," it would convey the same idea as that given in the text. True, he was crowned here on earth, but it was a crown of thorns that pierced his brow, and he wore that crown of thorns on earth that you and I might wear the crown of Everlasting Life. He wears the crown of glory now, and to us he is not only Saviour but King.

Here let us pause, my friends, and ask ourselves the question, "What is Jesus Christ to us personally?" There is a great power in personality, when we can bring these things home to ourselves, and each ask himself the question, Is Jesus my Saviour? Is Christ

my King? Sometime ago when Horace Mann, the great philanthropist, went west to dedicate a building that had been erected for the culture of boys, he said in his address, "If all the money and all the labor expended on this building had only been for one boy, and had resulted in his salvation, your labor, your money, your time would not have been expended in vain." At the banquet that was given him, one of his friends said to him, "Mr. Mann, do you not think you put it rather strongly to-day when you said that if all this work had resulted only in the salvation of one boy, that it would not have been wasted?" Mr. Mann thought awhile, and then replied, *"Not if it was my boy."* When we can bring this matter home to ourselves, it is then that the sublimest importance attaches to it. Is Jesus your Saviour? He stands to-day at the door and knocks, and says if you will receive him, he will be your Saviour; will stand in your stead; will bear your sorrows; carry the burden of your life.

Is Christ your King? It is in the heart that Christ sets up his throne and establishes his kingdom. He said, when he was here on the earth, you must not say, "Here is the kingdom, or there is the kingdom; the kingdom of God is within you"; and he comes into the heart, our Saviour King, and there establishes his throne forever.

"Of his kingdom there shall be no end"—Jesus Christ, our Saviour King! The man who has won Christ as his Saviour, and acknowledged Christ as his king, has secured the "pearl of great price." He has found the "unsearchable riches"; has fixed his destiny in heaven.

Now let us consider the chief thought of the text, namely, the *Unchangeableness* of Christ. He is the same "yesterday, and to-day and forever." In this changing life that we live, how precious the thought that we have a Saviour who changes not! You and I can set our affections upon any earthly object, but for how short a time it lasts, and yet, when we turn our eyes to the Son of God, our Saviour King, we find that he is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever"; the past, the present, the future, always the same.

Let us look a little deeper into this beautiful and comforting truth. He is the same in his *nature.* We are changing in our natures. I see before me, to-day, men and women whose heads are gray; and when you start away from this house, you will be careful how you walk; you will not step along with the nimble tread you did twenty, thirty, forty years ago. Why is this, that you tremble as you walk? You did not tremble in your youth. It is because you are changing—changing as the years go by. You are not the same as you were last year—will not be the same next year as you are this; but Jesus is the same in his nature. His natural strength is unabated; his sight is undimmed; no gray is found among his raven locks. He is the same Jesus whom Paul preached; the same Jesus upon whose bosom John leaned the night of the Supper; the same Jesus whom our forefathers loved, and for whom they suffered and died; the same Jesus in whose arms our loved ones fell asleep; and the same who will come for us by and by to receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also. When we

set our affections upon him, we love one whom neither time nor misfortune nor death can change—always the same.

Again, he is the same in his *plans and purpose.* You and I make our plans to-day, and we think we are going to carry them out; we believe heartily that we will work out that which we have determined in our minds; and yet, we are such creatures of circumstances, so subject are we to the daily changes that surround us, that we cannot say to-day what we will do to-morrow. "Boast not thyself of the morrow, for thou canst not tell what a day may bring forth." But it is not so with him; his plans and purposes are the same. He sees the end from the beginning, and there is no need of alteration.

I have not time to-day to mention more than one, but let us look at the "Plan of Salvation." The old plan has remained the same through these nineteen centuries. Men talk about a New Theology; they say the gospel has lost its power; they seek new themes in the pulpit to attract the people, because they fancy the gospel has lost its attractiveness. But, are these things true? The same gospel that was preached nineteen hundred years ago is the gospel for the human heart to-day. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"; and if this world should stand nineteen centuries longer, there will be no need for any change in the plan of salvation which Jesus has laid out. And then, the plan is so simple. Sometimes people stumble at this simplicity; they say, "What! just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that will save me? It seems to me there is something more

I should do of myself. Is there nothing for me to do but believe on the Lord Jesus?" Why, my friends, it has to be plain and simple. If it were not so, yonder little pauper child could not understand the minister who visits him in his dying hour, and tells him the story of the cross. A gentleman was standing in a hotel in London, when a little boy came along, and said, "Won't you buy some matches, sir?" He said, "I don't want any matches." The little fellow replied, "Mamma is poor, and we have no bread at home; won't you please buy some matches, that I may get some bread for her?" The good man said, "I do not know whether you are honest or not, but I will not turn you away,—give me change for this shilling." The little fellow said, "I will run and get it," and he ran away with the shilling. The clerk of the hotel said, "You will never see that shilling again." "Well," said the man, "if I do not, I cannot help it; perhaps he is a deserving lad, and I would not turn him away." But, the boy did not come back again. The next morning a little boy came inquiring if there was a stranger there who had given a little boy a shilling the day before. Being asked if he were the boy, he replied, "No, it was my brother." The stranger's attention was called to him, and the little fellow told his simple story: that his brother, in crossing the street, the day before, had been knocked down, and run over by a passing cart, and had been taken to his home; and he said, "All night long my brother has been crying for some one to bring you back your change, because he was afraid you would think he had stolen it." The man said, "Where is your brother; take me to him."

And he went down the street—through the lanes and alleys—to an humble little home, and there the little fellow lay upon his pallet of rags—moaning and dying. He stretched forth his hand as soon as he saw the stranger, and said, "Indeed, sir, I did not intend to steal your money, but I could not get back." "My dear child," said the noble man, "it makes no difference about that," and turning to the child's mother, he bade her buy such nourishing things as were necessary to comfort him; and then, sitting by the little fellow, and taking his hot, fevered hand in his, he said, "I will tell you of a far sweeter home than this, of a dearer friend than I have been"; and he told him the simple story—so plain—so clear that "He who runs may read." All night long he sat beside the dear little dying boy, and when the morning dawned the spirit of that little boy went home to be with Jesus—the unchangeable Jesus, whose simple plan had been accepted by the dying boy. He had taken that Saviour as his Saviour, and went away to be with him. God be praised for the simplicity of the gospel! and that there is no necessity for any change in the plans of Jesus to save poor sinners like you and me.

Furthermore, he is unchangeable in his *ability to carry out his plans.* How different from us! If I should come to you to-day, and say, "I am poor and needy; I want help," you might reply, "Come to me to-morrow and I will let you have some money"; and to-morrow I might go to you, and you would say, "When I told you to come, I had the means, but misfortune has befallen me since, and now I am as poor and helpless as yourself." Not so with Jesus. He is

able "to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him"—able to carry out the plan that he has made for the salvation of souls. He has commanded us, his ministers and disciples, to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and salvation is promised to every one who will receive him as his Saviour and King.

If there should be one here to-day, who, up to this time, has lived without that Saviour, and has disobeyed the Lord, let me tell you, the offer is to you, and he is able this day to forgive you all the past, and to secure to you a happy future through time, and for eternity. What a blessed thought this is: that our Saviour is able to save! When Isaiah beheld him, as he looked across the centuries, he asked this question: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" And then he seems to hear Jesus as he replies, "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." I commend to you this our mighty Saviour, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords"; the sympathizing Friend, that loves with a better and sweeter love than ever mother felt for her child.

Finally, upon this point: He is unchangeable in *his love*. To my mind, this is one of the most comforting thoughts in the Word of God; that if Jesus ever loved me, he loves me now, and loves me always. How sweet the words in the thirteenth chapter of John: "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." Friends may desert us; our dearest loved ones may turn coldly away; but Jesus Christ is the same. Approach him when you will, you will find him un-

changed, unchangeable. One of the highest compliments we can pay to a fellow-man is that he is always the same. We say of a man, "I know where to find him; he is not one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow." This high characteristic is really true only of Jesus. We know where to find him. His love abideth day by day, and no power can drive him away:

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes.
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never, forsake."

When I first came to the city of Baltimore I read, in one of our papers, of a young man, who, the day before, standing near a street lamp, had thrown a stone into the lamp. A policeman arrested him. He was brought before the judge, and when asked if he had anything to say in his defense, he replied: "Yes, judge; I was born in a foreign land; my father was a drinking man, and gave me to drink. I became addicted to the habit of intemperance, and it brought me into crime. I had to leave that country, and came to this. But my bad habits came with me. Soon after reaching here I was arrested, and confined in Sing Sing prison, in New York, where I always received letters from my mother. She was begging me to be a good boy and not do as I had done; and just before my time was out, I received a letter from her—written on her deathbed. She said that when that letter reached me, she would be gone away, and she asked me, for her sake, to try and lead a better life. I knelt down on the floor

of my prison, and asked God to help me to live the right sort of a life, and I have been trying from that day to this; and yesterday, without work, without money, without friends, I threw that stone into the street lamp because I knew I would be arrested, and I wanted to be brought into somebody's notice that would save me from a life of degradation and ruin." The paper stated that the judge did not fine the young man, but secured a home for him, and I hope he has lived a good life. The mother's love had saved her boy, and yet we are told that when our father and mother forsake us, the Lord will take us up. Oh! who can live without such love as that which comes from the warm heart of our unchangeable Saviour!

And now, dear friends, before you go away to-day, let us take these reflections to our hearts. First of all, there is no excuse for any one, that we are not saved; for the unchangeable Saviour has arranged that every soul that calls upon him shall have everlasting life. That is what brought him into the world: He came here to seek and to save you and me.

The second reflection is this: Here is encouragement for us. We need encouragement in this world. Our feelings change; our plans often come to nothing; our poor, frail natures are bowed beneath a weight of care and disease, and such burdens of life as are constantly laid upon us. But here is a strong arm on which we can lean. Here are loving words to cheer the drooping spirit. We need encouragement, and here it is. God grant that every one of us, this day, may have the happy experience in his heart that Jesus Christ, the Unchangeable One, is our Saviour and our King; and

then, when we cross over the river, and reach the shores of a better and brighter world than this, we shall ascribe the praise to him who loved us, and gave himself for us, and led us all the way from earth to our happy home on high.

INFLUENCE

None of us liveth to himself.—*Rom.* 14:7.

Man is naturally a social being. We are all formed for society, and dependent upon each other for our prosperity, mental development and improvement, comfort and happiness. It is true, poets have often depicted solitude as very desirous, and enjoyable. Byron sings:

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes,
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

And I do not deny that there is pleasure in occasional solitude, in taking one's self away from the world and spending a time in quiet meditation; but its pleasures cannot be of long duration, for we love to hold intercourse with our fellow men. Now and then, 'tis true, a misanthrope will make a hermit of himself. Now and then a man, with whose character the world has become disgusted, will himself in turn despise the world and spend his days in miserable loneliness, but the rare exception only proves the rule that man is a social being and dependent upon his fellows. The world with which he comes in daily contact makes its impression upon the man, and the man upon the world. From the time when God said it is not good for man to live alone, to the present hour, there has been a system of recipro-

cal pleasures and benefits, sorrows, and evils working in the affairs of men, and every mortal, with scarcely an exception, is placed upon earth by his Creator for some good purpose, and has been enabled by the actions of his life to impress those around him in society either for good or evil. In other words, such is our constitution and our nature as we exist here upon earth, every one of us must exert an influence upon those around us, either directly or indirectly, for their weal or woe. We are beings of influence, and that influence must be felt in our families, in our churches, in our state, and in our country; and it is to this important fact that I desire to direct your attention to-day. We cannot confine ourselves to the narrow limit of a personal and individual existence. "None of us liveth to himself." The idea which the apostle conveys here is that men in this world do not exist for their own personal aggrandizement and advancement, but that all of us, as one grand system, are working together for the cause of Jesus Christ. The grand idea is, each for the other, and all for God.

Let us dwell briefly upon the point already intimated that *we are beings of influence.* It is true that there is a vast difference with reference to the degree of that influence, but I believe I can truly say, without the fear of successful contradiction, that there is no man who fails to exert some influence upon those around him. Such is the nature of the mind and moral character of man, that, like the chemically prepared glass of the artist, it takes impressions from every object that passes before it; and be that object great or small, it stamps itself indelibly upon the soul. The humble man

who moves in the most inferior circle yet meets with others upon his level, and each affects the other; and so as you move on accordingly through the different grades of society the degree of influence greatly increases until you reach the highest standard, and you find a single man giving color to the character of a nation. Such men as our own hero—the immortal Washington—or Spurgeon, or Bunyan—, who like the angel standing in the sun, sent out their radiance through the world. We have but to listen to the voice of experience, or turn to the page of holy writ to find that we are beings of influence.

Our influence is *permanent in its character:* once exerted, it cannot be destroyed or undone. We are all parts of a mighty system. Like the machinery of the clock, every movement of a wheel is recorded on the dial-plate, and there it stands to all observers. So with mankind, every act performed is written upon the character of the world around us, for good or evil, in the grand progress of our existence. There is a law of natural philosophy that action and reaction are equal. You stand upon the shore of a smooth and great lake, and drop a pebble upon its surface. A little wave is made, which starts out and rolls on, widening and increasing, till it breaks upon the other shore. So, as we stand upon the shore of the lake of man's moral life, every word and deed agitates its surface. The wave is formed and rolls on through souls, and minds, and hearts, never ceasing in its work till it breaks on the shores of eternity, and the calculation may then be made of the wondrous good or evil which that little word or insignificant act has done. We may deter-

mine what words we shall speak or what acts we shall perform, but there our authority ceases. The act having been done, the word spoken, they have their effect forever.

Let us see if this be true. In the Garden of Eden, in an unguarded hour, the first created beings committed a simple and a single transgression, and to-day a crowded world lies guilty under the influence of that sinful deed. See here the mighty power of an evil influence. On Calvary the Man of Nazareth breathed his last amid the cries and execration of his murderers; and to-day, through him, the guilty world may live. Cast your eye over the civilized world, and who can calculate the good which has been accomplished by the influence of the gospel of the Son of God? And that blessed influence still is working like leaven in the affairs of men, and only God himself can aggregate the results of its great power. And so, coming down to other times, we find the influence of men working long after they have departed from the world. Scarcely a great poet lives whose character has not been tinged with a higher color by the influence of a Shakespeare, a Virgil, or a Homer; and Cicero and Demosthenes have inspired the hearts and the tongues of many of the world's best orators. But why need we look to other sources when the Bible is before us? Abraham and all the patriarchs, Isaiah and all the prophets, Paul and all the apostles, created influences which have worked for good in the past, and will work on even till the end of time. These have been influences for good —but, oh! the influences for evil! Take Hume, and Gibbon, and Paine, and Tyndall, and who could under-

take to fathom the depths of the misery they have wrought? As with these great men, so with us. Every day, every hour, we are exerting an influence which must live long after we are gone, and whether for good or evil, it survives the stroke of death, outlives the pulverizing process of the grave, and will be found working when the busy din of time shall have been hushed in the great dawn of eternity. Oh! what a sublime and awful thing to live!

We are responsible to God for our influence. We must render an account for all our acts, words, thoughts and feelings. He gives us the power to use and exercise these; and if we use them wrongfully, we are compelled to suffer for the wilful transgression of his laws. These acts, thoughts, words, and feelings, are the manufacturers of influence—and if responsible for the one, we are responsible for the other. Our thoughts, words and deeds are the foundation, while the influence which we exert is the grand superstructure. If the foundation is right, the building will stand. God calls upon us to do all the good in our power in this world—but how? Not by physical force, but by moral force. By influence we are to work upon those around us. "Let your light so shine that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven." But if that influence be for evil, so far from being rewarded, we shall suffer for the misery brought upon those around us. The Word of God even condemns the inactivity of men. It goes beyond their mere evil influence, and condemns them if they are not working for good. "Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the in-

habitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the might." So we see that we are not only responsible to God for an evil influence, but we are responsible to him if we do not exert an influence for good. How careful should men live when they think of the influence they are exerting!

How circumspectly should they walk when they consider that one misstep may involve a host of others in utter ruin. Having now seen that we are beings of an indestructible influence, and are responsible to God for that influence, let us now have practical reference to our duties in this regard. I would, above all others, impress upon the church members the importance of the text, "None of us liveth to himself." We live for each other, that we may all be benefited and God's name glorified. Paul says, comfort ye one another, edify each other, bear one another's burdens, and especially, walk worthy of your vocation. Let us ever remember that we are the followers of Christ, that his cause is entrusted to our care, and that every act of our lives tells for good or evil upon that cause. My brethren, there is a mighty power in the walk and conversation of an humble, earnest Christian. Not only in his own family and in his church, but his influence is felt in the daily walks of life, and every man will look upon him as a man of God. I appeal to you to-day, young and old: bear in mind that you are living not for yourselves, but for those around you, and for God. I am free to say that if our members and our ministry were more upright in their walk with God, more consistent in their religion, the Church of Christ

would make a far more rapid progress in revolutionizing the morals of mankind.

But I pass without the doors of the sanctuary, and would carry my subject even nearer to the hearts of men. The professional man, the lawyer, the physician, exert a strong influence in a community. The people look up to them as men of intelligence, as men informed in the all-important subjects of the day; and what a light is that man in the community if he be noted for his piety, his honesty, his love of truth and devotion to duty! But, oh! what a shadow of evil influence must ever hang around the infidel doctor or unbelieving lawyer! As with them, so with the politician, the representative man of a community. I believe that many of our severest evils and greatest wrongs are traceable to the bad influence of the leading men of our country. I would to God that their hearts could be made the dwelling-place of his Holy Spirit, that they might be ever sending out a healthful influence to refresh the souls of their fellow men; and so, too, with the merchant, the farmer, the mechanic. That young man in your store will catch many a lesson from your deportment; that laborer upon your farm, that apprentice in your shop, will receive impressions from you that will have much to do in shaping his future life. Beware! oh! beware the example which you keep before him in your daily life.

I desire now to speak of another phase of life. To the young man I would especially urge the value of his influence. It may be that you are more intelligent and cultivated than others of your age—it may be that

other young men regard you with respect and confidence. I beg you, as you love your soul, as you love the welfare of your friends, I beg you guard well the influence which you exercise over them. A glass of wine, taken with a friend who has less decision and force of will than yourself, an incautious remark, an oath, an hour at the saloon or gaming-table, may start that young friend into a course of life which may end in hopeless ruin; and though his morning may have been bright and glorious, your own hand, by one thoughtless act, may spread a gloom over his pathway, and cause that day to end in an eternal night of misery and despair. Young man, remember, you live not to yourself, but have a weight of influence on those around you which must result in pleasure, or serious and unending pain.

I should feel that I had not discharged my duty, did I pass unnoticed the influence exerted by the young women of the land. Many a young man has been elevated, strengthened, and urged forward in the path of duty by the hand of woman; but many, encouraged in sinful habits by those who have never stopped to think, have been brought to lives of idleness, dissipation and ruin. Let me remind you that upon you rests a great responsibility. Not only with reference to those of your own sex, but also the young men with whom you come in contact. If the ladies of our country would erect a standard of virtue, of truth and religion,—if they would ever smile upon the good and frown upon the evil with unmingled disgust and disapprobation, their influence would be a power in promoting the welfare of mankind.

But, fathers and mothers, what shall I say to you? Many a boy has gone to his grave in sorrow following the footsteps of a wicked father. It seems to me, if there be suffering in hell keener and more lasting than all others, it must be for a father to descend to that lone land of despair, and there behold his child, who had gone there under the effects of a bad influence, and as he would look upon his boy, hear him, in an agonizing groan, utter the words which must crush his heart and add intensity to hell itself: *"Father! you sent me here!"* Oh! fathers! as you love your children, remember that you live for them, and they are affected by your example and your influence. But of all the influences which work upon the growing character there is none so sweet, so powerful, as the mother's. 'Tis she who teaches the infant lips to lisp the name of Jesus; 'tis she who points with a frown to the wickedness of earth as she joyously lifts her smiling boy into the light of heaven; 'tis she who bends that young life by her tender care into the paths of truth, or by baleful neglect permits it to grow up among the weeds of wickedness and ruin. Not long ago there was a man convicted of a high crime, and when asked to say why sentence of the law should not be pronounced against him, the rough-looking culprit melted into tears as he replied, as his only reason: "I have never had a mother to shed tears over me." There was a volume of meaning in that reply. If he had had a mother to direct, to advise, to pray, his life might have been far different. It is sweet to have a pleasant home, with all its comforts and its joys; 'tis pleasant, too, to have friends to whom we can go in distress for com-

fort and relief; it is nice to have the good things of this world around us; but you may take away home with all its comforts, take away friends with all their kindness and their love, take away the world and all the pleasures it can offer,—but give me, oh! give me the happy influence of a mother's tender care. If there be in this world one person more than another who has all the sympathy of my heart, it is that young man who has no mother. If there be a human agency or influence which has called me from a wicked life and directed my footsteps into an earnest effort to serve my God, it has been the influence and prayers of a devoted and sainted mother, whom I hardly knew ere she was called away; and ofttimes, in my thoughtless, careless hours, memory has called me to her bedside, when, in her last moments, as she pressed her lips to the face of her youngest boy, she whispered: "Meet me! meet me in heaven!" Mothers! you little know the power of your influence! It will live in the hearts of your children long after you have been called from earth.

And now, in conclusion, if our lives in the past have not been as we would have them, let us not give up to remorse. Life's day is too brief. The shadows of evening almost kiss the retiring mists of morning. Let us live for the present, and each, by the grace of God, be better in the future. We strike a chord in this life which will vibrate throughout the years of time—nor will it be hushed in eternity. God help us so to live that our influence may ever work for good among our fellow men, and result at last in honor and glory to his name.

HEAVEN

Shall We Know Each Other There?

Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also.—*John* 14: 1-3.

"I go to prepare a place for you." These words were spoken by the Lord and Saviour the night before his crucifixion. He had already informed his disciples of his departure and their hearts were troubled. He assures them he is worthy of their trust and that if they believe in God they will also believe in him. And believing in him have everlasting life.

We love to think of our Heavenly Home, and wonder whether we shall know each other there. All of us are interested in this subject, and for two reasons: In the first place, every one of us expects to go to heaven. I do not believe that there is a man, woman or child in this house, listening to me now, who does not expect at the last to go to heaven, and I am glad of it. The only thing, my friends, is to see to it that you are in the right road to heaven. You remember when Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, and whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know," and Thomas said unto him: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way." So that if

you and I are in Christ to-night, if we have accepted him as our Saviour, if we are trusting in him and trying to follow him, there is no doubt about it, we are in the way to heaven, and we have the best reasons for supposing that we will get to heaven, and we ought to want to know something about how it is.

The other reason why we are all interested in this subject is this: There is no one here but has lost a loved one, and sometimes, as we think about the dear ones gone, we wonder if we shall know them. I often wonder in my heart if I shall know my mother and other loved ones gone, and how they will look; and thinking upon these things, I have examined the subject in the Scriptures more carefully and with more intense interest, it seems to me, than I have any other subject in the Bible. It is my deliberate conviction that we shall know each other in heaven, and I am here to tell you the reasons that brought me to that conclusion. I believe that in heaven we shall recognize each other, and I want you to listen to the reasons I have to give and see if you do not think so too.

Let me call your attention, first of all, to a fact which I hope you will keep in your mind as I go along talking: *Heaven is a place.* Now, we are in the habit of thinking of heaven as a floating something—a baseless fabric that has no body or foundation. Remember, my friends, heaven is a place, just as much as earth is a place and more so, for heaven is eternal, and this world shall be destroyed. You know, heaven is spoken of as the Eternal City whose maker and builder is God. It is spoken of sometimes as a better country, and we are pilgrims passing through a strange land on

our way to that better country. We sing sometimes, "I am but a stranger here, heaven is my home." Jesus said to them, "I go to prepare a place for you." Bear it in mind, then, that heaven is a place, and furthermore, remember that *the inhabitants of heaven* are people. I know there are angels there, and blessed spirits, perhaps, of whom we have no account in God's Word; but we are sure that among the inhabitants of heaven are people.

John, when he had the vision of which I have been reading in Revelation, said he saw a great number clothed in white, and an elder said to him, "Who are these, John?" He seemed afraid to reply. Presently he said to him, "Sir, thou knowest." "Thou knowest," as if he would not venture to say, and then the elder answered, "These are they who came up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Who are they? They are the redeemed. And so among the inhabitants of heaven are the people, the redeemed and many of our dear ones who have passed through the trials and tribulations of this world, and have heard the voice of the Father, saying, "It is enough, come up higher," and they have gone to be with him.

Again, let us bear in mind *these people have bodies;* they are sown a natural body, they are raised a spiritual body. These spiritual bodies are not such as we have now, trammeled by the flesh; they are not burdened by fleshy weight, but, as some old preacher has represented it, they can pass hither and thither like flashes of thought. For example, my mind is now in

San Francisco, California—so is yours; now it is up among the stars—so is yours; now it is in New York—so is yours; now it is here—so is yours. Quick as thought flashes our spirit will travel from place to place at the direction of the will. You know Jesus passed in and out through a house, and in an instant was caught away. After the crucifixion, Jesus and the saints arose from the grave and showed their bodies to the disciples. So we know these people have bodies after resurrection.

Now, this is the question: Since heaven is a place, and heaven's inhabitants are people and have bodies, *are these bodies recognizable?* Shall we know each other in these spiritual bodies in which we shall dwell in heaven?

First of all, let me say, *there is nothing in Scripture against it.* I cannot find, from Genesis to Revelation, anything against it. On the other hand we are encouraged to believe it is so. Do you not know that when Jesus was asked by a disciple, "Suppose a woman has five husbands, and by and by they and she will die, whose wife would she be in the resurrection?" Jesus might have set that whole question at rest by simply saying, "Why, in the resurrection you will not know each other"; but he did not—he always dealt fairly with them. He said about heaven: "If it were not so, I would have told you," and he would have said then, "You will not know each other in the resurrection"; but he simply said, "In the resurrection the relations will be different; you will be like the angels." You remember the angel said to John, "I am thy fellow-

servant." So in the resurrection Jesus teaches us to believe the relation will be different, and we shall recognize each other.

The only argument I have ever seen against it—and it is no argument, but rather the suggestion of a difficulty—is this: A dear mother here to-night will say, "Brother Wharton, suppose when I get to heaven I shall find my sweet child absent; how could I be happy? If I am to recognize people there, and find my child missing, how could I be happy?" The only reply that I can make to that is this: God does not answer that question. I cannot find it answered anywhere in the Scripture. I can only say this: We shall be happy in heaven. I say furthermore, Jesus Christ is far better than any of us have ever taken him to be, good as we believe he is, and nobody can tell what transpires in that last minute between the dying one and his Saviour. Who shall undertake to say that your loved one who has gone out of the world, and for whom you have but the slightest hope, in the last minute may not have caught a glimpse of his Saviour, and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom."

Now, let us take *the representations of heaven* as sustaining this view that we recognize each other. Heaven is represented as a feast, and I am here, dear friends, to invite every one of you to this feast—the feast of the blessed Lamb, and to say that all things are ready; come, every one, and partake of it; it is your blessed privilege; let him that heareth say, come, and, whosoever will, let him come. Heaven is represented as a feast. Now, what would you think of a

feast held in Baltimore, and the papers should come out and say such a man had a feast, and nobody at the feast knew anybody else? Would not that be a strange feast—every one a stranger? You might account for it here by saying it was a masked party; but there will not be any masking in heaven. And so when God tells us heaven is a feast, I understand it that the guests will know each other there.

Heaven is also represented as a family. "The whole family of God on earth and in heaven." It is one of the sweetest thoughts that in heaven and on earth God has a family—some who have passed over to the other side, some on this side. If your spiritual eyes could be opened, I think you could see some of them looking down with anxious hearts, hoping that their loved ones would give themselves to God this very hour. The whole family—the good on earth and in heaven; some have passed over, and some are passing over, and it will not be long ere you and I shall hear the welcome words, "Child, thy Father calls; come home." Another blessed truth is that new children are being born into the family every day—in this country, across the seas, all over the earth; and did you ever think that as the gospel spreads and laborers are multiplied, more and more going out and preaching the Word—that the joy in heaven is increased? They rejoice over every sinner that returns, and whenever a sinner is born into the kingdom, joy springs up in the better land, and the glad shouts ring throughout the skies.

Now, what would you think of a family sitting around the family circle, and not one of them knowing

the other? Would it not be a strange family? Can you think of a household like that? I cannot conceive of our Father's family sitting around in heaven and not knowing each other; and when God represents it as a whole family, and all crossing over and getting safely in heaven, I believe that they will know one another.

Take another reason—*our knowledge.* "Then shall I know, even as I am known." An old preacher was asked by his wife: "Do you think we shall know one another in heaven?" He said: "Wife, we know one another here, and we shall certainly not have less sense in heaven than we have on earth."

Let us consider *some of the incidents of Scripture.* Some say we do not learn anything by the Mount of Transfiguration. I cannot agree with them. There was Jesus on the mount, and three of the apostles with him, and there appeared Moses and Elias, and Peter said, "Let us build three tabernacles—one for thee and one for Elias." Did not Peter know that Moses and Elias were there? And if Peter, while in the flesh, could know them, do you not suppose he knows them now, being with them?

Then take the parable of the rich man. Jesus represented him as in torment, and looking up, he beholds Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Now, if a man in hell can recognize a man in heaven, do you not think another man in heaven would recognize him? I tell you, it intensifies the horrors of hell to know that you can see and know those in heaven. Moore, in his poem, makes one say, in a terrible imprecation:

"And when from earth his spirit flies,
Just Prophet, let the damned one dwell
Full in the sight of Paradise,
Beholding Heaven, yet feeling hell."

It is a fearful picture of torment, my friends, that we may see heaven, while feeling hell; but surely that truth is taught in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Again, Jesus says many shall come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. What does it mean, if it does not mean that in sitting down with them we shall know them? Yes, and without an introduction!

I believe in passing along the golden streets of the Beautiful City some day, in your spiritual form, you will see one approaching, and your heart and mind will tell you, Here comes old Isaiah; and some day you will see a dignified form coming, and you will say, "Brother Paul, sit down with us about twenty-five hundred years and have a talk; tell us something of your glorious earthly life." Some day, sister, you will hear a sweet song swelling above the voices of heaven, and you will say, "There is Mary Magdalene. How she sings!" She is the poor sinner who lay at the feet of Jesus, and out of whom he cast seven devils. You will not need an introduction, for untrammeled and set free from the flesh you will know them. What does the text say? "I shall know even as I am known."

I think one of the strongest, if not the strongest argument in favor of heavenly recognition is this: *Jesus Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection.* Let us look at this a moment. What do you understand

the first fruits to be? Some of you have lived in the country. Suppose some one came with a bundle of wheat to you, and said, "This is the first fruits of my harvest," would you think the balance of the harvest was oats? Should he come out of an orchard with a basket of apples, and say, "This is the first fruits of my orchard," would you think the balance was oranges? No; you would expect the balance to come pretty well up to the sample.

Jesus arose from the dead, and said, "I am the first fruits of the resurrection." What are we to expect but that the other fruits of the resurrection harvest are to be like him? After he arose from the dead, Mary looked up into his face, and said: "Master." Thomas touched his wounded side and hands, and said: "My Lord and my God." They knew Jesus after his resurrection, and if he is the first Fruits of the resurrection, is not the balance to be like him, and shall not you and I, when we rise from our graves, be like him? Does he not say so? We shall be satisfied when we shall wake in his likeness. They knew Jesus; they will know you, and they will know me.

But look at other things in the Scripture. *Every one of us must give account of himself to God,* and do you not believe you will be identified when you stand out and give your account? Furthermore, he says something like this is going to happen up there. He says some of us are coming before him, and he will say: "I was sick and ye visited me, naked and ye clothed me, thirsty and ye gave me drink," and that we, in our own proper persons, will say, "Lord, when did we do these things?" And he will answer, "Inas-

much as ye did it unto one of the least of these disciples, ye have done it unto me." Does not that look as if you would be known? My sister, I do not think you have ever given a cup of water to a pauper child, or sent a meal to a sick woman, that Jesus Christ has not treasured it up and will remember it, and will tell you about it some day. Oh, blessed thought! Who does not want to love the Saviour, and do everything they can for him, when these things are true? "I will not forget a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple."

Furthermore, listen how Paul talks. When writing about the people he led to Christ, do you remember what he said? Call it to mind. He said, "In that day ye shall be my joy and crown of rejoicing." "Paul, what do you mean?" "I mean that out of Corinth and Ephesus, out of Rome and Athens, out of every place I have visited and preached the Word, I shall see men and women and children whom I have led to Christ in heathen lands." Oh, beloved, if there is a joy above another in heaven it will be to stand and look into the face of some wanderer that you went after and brought back to God—saved by your own efforts. Many strange things happen around death-beds which we cannot explain, except by the light of this truth.

Some time ago while holding a meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, the pastor of the church, Dr. William Felix, said to me, "I had a strange experience a short time ago. I was sitting by the bedside of a dying woman. As we sat silent, expecting every moment to be her last, she fixed her eyes upon the ceiling and

seemed to be looking at some one and then said, 'They are gone.' I thought her mind was wandering and quietly inquired of her, 'Did you see some one?' 'Yes,' she answered, 'my husband and little boy were right there. They are gone now.' 'Do you know me?' inquired the pastor. 'Of course I do, Dr. Felix. You think I am not in my right mind, but I am. I saw them; just there,' indicating by her eyes where they were. In a few minutes she passed away."

I heard of a little child who had lost her mother when she was only two weeks old. She lived to be four or five years of age, and when dying stretched her little hands up above her as if she was trying to grasp some one and said, "Oh, there is mamma!" and the little hands fell pulseless and powerless upon her body. She was gone.

The famous Andrew Broadus of Virginia when dying smiled as he looked up and some one asked, "You are smiling, do you see anything unusual?" "Yes," said he, "the angels are teaching me how to behave in heaven."

I was conducting a meeting in Tuskegee, Alabama, some years ago. One morning there came to my hotel a gentleman I met before Judge Hunt, who at that time was on the bench of the Circuit Court in that district. After he sat a while he said to me, "Doctor Wharton, I wish to relate to you a very remarkable incident." I was glad of this for I am always glad to hear matters of interest that pertained to the experience of others. "I lost my first wife," said he, "many years ago, and she left me with a baby boy not a year old, who, of course, had never recognized or known

his mother. He lived to be eighteen and died at that age. In the meantime I had married again and my second wife was all that a mother could be to that boy, not to be his own. On the morning of his departure I was kneeling on one side of the bed and his mother was sitting on the other side holding his hands and quietly talking with him. He was perfectly conscious and his mind was as clear as I have ever known it. We knew he was dying and, of course, every word that fell from his lips was precious to us. A pause ensued and he turned to his mother, "Where is father?" She replied, "He is on the other side of the bed." And then he called to me, saying, "Father, come around to this side." I walked around and knelt beside my wife as she sat still holding his hand. He withdrew his hand and placed it on my head, looked for a moment into my face and said, "You have been a good father to me, always kind and loving ever since I have known you, and I thank you for it more than I can tell you." He then turned his eyes to his step-mother and said, "And you, ma, have always been as sweet and loving as any one not a mother could be to a child. You have endeared yourself to me by your unselfish kindness and I appreciate it with all my heart." A moment of silence followed. Looking up, he said, "Why, mother, it is certainly good of you to come and get me and go with me home." My wife bending over said to him, "Son, I am right here." "Yes," he said, "I know you are, but there is my own mother waiting for me to go with her." We were speechless, looking eagerly into his face, the tears streaming down our faces and then his face beamed with joy and he said, "All right,

mother, I am ready to go. Good-by." And with a sigh he was gone.

How are we to understand these things? It seems to me that there is but one solution and that is, that as we approach the dying hour and ascend the heights from which we are to take our departure the veil is lifted aside and we see those who are gone before. Oftentimes our Saviour himself manifests his presence to welcome his follower home.

I have set before you some reasons why it seems to me we may accept the truth that we shall know each other as followers of Jesus Christ when at last we shall come into their presence in our Father's House. We shall know each other there, but should we not know each other a little better here and try to get closer to one another in sympathy and help and love and do all that is within our power to help them on their way and to induce others to come and go with us. That is what we are here for. Once more to offer salvation in the name of Jesus Christ to every unsaved soul in this congregation and to say that whosoever will may come tonight and begin the heavenly journey. Will you come? "The Spirit and the Bride say come and let him that heareth come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

I once heard John B. Gough relate his experience. He said when he was overcome by drink and utterly cast down, as he walked the streets, with his toes out of his shoes and his hair sticking through holes in his hat and his clothes old and ragged, he went shuffling along, saying, "I care for nobody and nobody cares for me," a man met him and said, "Gough, is it not

time you were turning around and leading a better life? I wish you would go with me to-night." Gough did not want to go, but he insisted, and finally Gough said: "I will go," and that night he resolved that he would lead a better life. The next day he stood in a carpenter's shop, with a chisel in his hand, working to get something to eat that day; the chisel turned to a serpent. He saw the eyes gazing into his; he said he knew it was not so, that it was only delirium, in his brain; he knew that what he wanted was liquor, and he said his hair stood on end and the sweat broke out in great drops. The serpent fell from his hand, and from the shavings looked up, shooting out its tongue and glaring in his face. "I can't stand it, I can't stand it; I must have a drink." Just then a Christian lawyer stepped into the shop, and said to him: "Gough, old fellow, I have been looking for you; I heard of you last night, and I have been hunting for you, and I have come in here to tell you to stand up and don't surrender. Be brave. I have the best wife in the world, and she told me to tell you that she had hot coffee and bread, and if you will come down she will play and sing for you. Fight it through, and you will come out all right." As that man walked out, Gough said he put his trembling hand to his cold, wet brow and said, *"God helping me, I WILL."*

That is what we want now. We want men and women for heaven; and I tell you, wives, mothers and sisters, you can do a wonderful work along that line if you will.

A friend of mine gave me the following incident, which shows what can be done in the home: A gentle-

man said to him, "I belonged to three clubs, and I was a drinking man and I gambled, and got to going away from home and staying away, and I didn't know what would become of me. One night I started out with forty-seven dollars in my pocket and came back during the night and did not have forty-seven cents. The next morning I went down to breakfast, and as I walked down I saw my wife standing in one corner of the room with my daughter by her side. They looked pale, ghastly and forsaken, and I looked at them, and said, 'What is the matter with you all?' My daughter looked into my face, and said, 'Papa, do you know what time you came home last night?' 'No, child, I do not.' Then she said, 'That is what is the matter with mother and me.' I pushed my plate back, and said, 'That is enough; that is enough; that will do. Come here, both of you, and kneel down beside me, and God Almighty being my helper, I will never drink another drop.' That has been two years ago, and never since then has a drop passed my lips."

Yes, dear friends, we shall know each other in heaven, but let us know each other here, and let us have a heart of sympathy, a cheering word and a helping hand.

"We shall reach the other side,
Some sweet day by and by.
We shall cross the stormy tide
Some sweet day by and by.
There before our Father's throne,
When the mists and clouds are flown
We shall know as we are known
Some sweet day by and by.

"Oh, these parting scenes will end
Some sweet day by and by.
We shall gather friend with friend
Some sweet day by and by.
And the star that fading here
Left our homes and hearts so drear
We shall see more bright and clear
Some sweet day by and by." *

* Note.—I always sang those two verses.—H. M. W.

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